

THE UK'S BEST SELLING TATTOO MAGAZINE

Skin Deep

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THE BEST TATTOOS ON THE PLANET
Free Inside
SKIN SHOTS TASTER
IF YOU EVER WANT TO SEE
WHAT YOU SEE
INSIDE...
500

FEEL THE HEAT

THIS MONTH, WE HAVE SUCH SIGHTS TO SHOW YOU

NOT LEAST A MONSTER EXCLUSIVE IN WHICH **PAUL BOOTH** MEETS UP WITH **H.R. GIGER** AT HIS MUSEUM IN SWITZERLAND - THE RESULTS ARE PHENOMENAL! NOT CONTENT WITH THAT, WE'VE ALSO BEEN HANGING OUT WITH **JEFF COGUE** TO SEE WHAT MAKES THE AWARD WINNING TATTOO MASTER TICK.

SOMETIME LATER, WE HOOKED UP WITH **MY RUIN'S TARRIE B** IN L.A., AND CAME HOME VIA **SAN FRANCISCO** ON AN EXTENDED ROAD TRIP. THIS LEFT US JUST ENOUGH TIME TO UNCOVER THE MAJOR TALENTS OF **JOSH BODWELL** AND **MARK POOLE**, BEFORE BEING MIGHTILY IMPRESSED BY HUGE TOMES FROM **EDITION REUSS** AND UNCOVER SCENES FROM **THE PARIS INTERNATIONAL**.

AS USUAL, THAT'S JUST THE TIP OF THE 'BERG. MORE INSIDE...



ISSUE 206
JANUARY 2012
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The needle has landed



Agneszka Hairsis

AND AS IF BY MAGIC...

Jeez. What happened to the year? Where did it go? One minute I've got Craigy Lee on the other side of the world, the next minute he's back on my doorstep. Looking back on a year – which is after all, just a convenient marking of time and little more – it's interesting to chew over our expectation of certain things, live through them and then realise that time and life itself, never really works out how you thought it would...

A friend of mine who is a movie critic (probably sounds more interesting than it is in all honesty) showed me a blog post he had written this time last year about the movies he was most looking forward to in 2011. Looking the list over, of the ten movies on it I would say that three of them were still worth talking about after the event: *Tintin*, *Super 8* and *War Horse*. All of these had one thing in common – Steven Spielberg. The other seven, let's just say that

despite their initial hype, history won't be treating them kindly. If indeed history will be treating them at all.

Funny thing, hype. People use it foolishly to build up expectation of something that might not really be reality in the end result. Spielberg doesn't have to answer to anybody

SPIELBERG DOESN'T HAVE TO ANSWER TO ANYBODY THESE DAYS – UNLIKE HIS FRIEND GEORGE LUCAS WHO MUST ANSWER TO EVERYBODY BUT THAT'S ANOTHER STORY...

these days – unlike his friend George Lucas who must answer to everybody, but that's another story – one that maybe Josh Bodwell can answer for me – see page 82.

It's been quite a year though. I tried to do a count-up last week of how much had been raised for charity by tattoo artists in 2011, but had to give up due to the sheer amounts of money involved. It's well over a million though, easily. So for all

the whining and gunfire about celebrities and scratchers that the mainstream media like to fire at us as a community, I would say that's a pretty good start in anybody's book.

Not only that, but the more we expose tattooing as a unique art form, the more fantastic it seems to get. The word on the street

occupying that space at the cutting edge, is that you can't constantly look to and drain tattoo itself for inspiration. It has to come from other places. We should be mining the past for all it's worth because art goes back thousands of years and not just living memory. Bring it on.

For occasional extra doses from *The Needle Has Landed*, check in on the blog at theneedlehaslanded.tumblr.com



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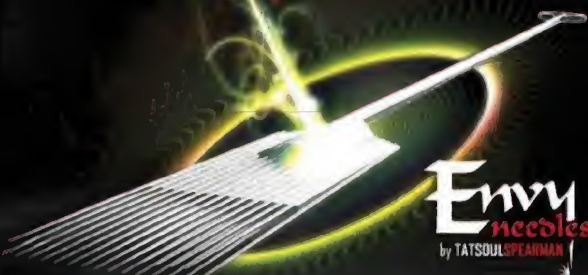
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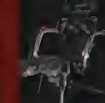
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1929L POWER LINER

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H.R. GIGER MUSEUM

PAUL BOOTH AND HR GIGER? HELL YEAH - COME SEE WHAT WE'VE GOT!



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Jazz Publishing, The Old School, Higher Kinnerton, Chester, CH4 9AJ, UK. Tel: 01244 663400 Fax: 01244 660611 www.jazzpublishing.co.uk info@jazzpublishing.co.uk

EDITOR Sion Smith editor@skindeep.co.uk 07841 999334	PRODUCTION MANAGER Justine Hart production@skindeep.co.uk 01244 663400 ext. 235	Katie-Marie Challinor katie@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 663400 Ext. 220	EVENTS CO-ORDINATOR Wendy Marks wendy.marks@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 663400 ext. 305	WEB DESIGN Nick Toye nick.toye@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 663400 ext. 222	SUBSCRIPTIONS & BACK ISSUES magazines@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01778 392086	PRINTING Warners Midlands plc
ART EDITOR Gareth Evans gareth@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 663400 ext. 204	ACCOUNTS & ADMIN MANAGER Emma McCrindle accounts@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 663400 ext. 207	CREDIT CONTROL Pam Coleman pam@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 663400 ext. 215	EVENT SPONSORSHIP Mark McCarthy mark@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 663400 ext. 299	DIGITAL CONTENT Gareth Williams gareth.williams@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 663400 ext. 302	PUBLISHER David Gamble david@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 663400	DISTRIBUTION Susan Saunders susan.saunders@seymour.co.uk 0207 429 4073 ISSN 0966-4351
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Sleeve Notes

twitter.com/skinddeepmag www.facebook.com/tattoomagazine

ALL SUBMISSIONS TO SLEEVE NOTES GRATEFULLY RECEIVED. BE IT NEWS, AN EVENT, NEW MERCH, A STUDIO MOVE... WE'LL DO OUR VERY BEST TO LET EVERYBODY ELSE KNOW ABOUT IT TOO. EMAIL: EDITOR@SKINDEEP.CO.UK OR IF YOU WANT TO BE ARCHAIC ABOUT THE WHOLE AFFAIR: SKIN DEEP, THE OLD SCHOOL, HIGHER KINNERTON, CHESTER CH4 9AJ. BRING IT.



TIME AFTER TIME



We're giving away this hip 'n' groovy clock from Sourpuss to one reader alone! Usual rules. Send an email to: editor@skindeep.co.uk with the subject line TIGER CLOCK and we'll do the rest - before Christmas too. Do you feel lucky, punk?



A SAD PARTING

Jenny Clarke Design are very sad to have to announce the sudden and unexpected death of Paul Castledine, ten years partner to Jenny.

Paul was well known and liked by many tattooists, artists and studios not only in the UK, but worldwide - the cheery chap who brought the design sets round and was always up for a laugh and a bit of banter.

Latterly Paul was not out on the road very often, as other members of the Jenny Clarke team made the studio visits, but Paul was to be found at the Jenny Clarke stand at many conventions, always good natured and thoroughly enjoying a good ribbing from the many customers who had become friends over the years. Unless, of course, anyone photographed the flash, in which case Paul would be on them like a Rottweiler, swear words peppering the air.

Thanks to his professional background, Paul was able to help many studios maintain their success with sound business advice, and he was always delighted to see tattoo studios doing well. His seminars at Skin Deep's very own Tattoo Jam always went down a storm - giving studios plenty of fresh ideas and motivation.

Jenny Clarke Design is still going strong - any enquires can be made via Trevor at the office on 01509 210419 or by emailing: info@jennyclarkedesign.com. Paul will be sadly missed.

BROKEN GIRLS CLUB GIVEAWAY

Following on from last month's cover girl feature, Hollie Bryant and her new Broken Girls Club have offered us some gear to give away in one of our world famous, rock hard comps. We've got sets of beanies, hoodies and T-shirts to mail out. As usual email with the subject of BROKEN GIRLS to editor@skindeep.co.uk and we'll draw at random.

INKED UP PHONES

Got an iPhone 3 or 4? You might like to get yourself one of these babies. The cases feature a very slim profile, and are made out of an extremely strong plastic called Lexan, which is a stronger, lighter, more flexible, and of higher quality compared to other plastic cases on the market. The case covers the back and corners, so you can protect your iPhone while having a unique design to suit your style. Purty! All are available for purchase at: society6.com/annecobai.



THE TREE OF LIFE

If you're looking for a novel way to pimp up your festive tree this year, check out the online boutique at Diablo Jo's Rockabilly Accessories. This month, she's given us some sets of these cool Christmas decorations to give away. Email: editor@skindeep.co.uk with the subject line DIABLO, and we'll do the rest! Website: www.diablojos.com Email: jo.mulley@btinternet.com



SHORT SLEEVES

FROM DUSK TO DAWN

For reasons best known to themselves, Dusk Clothing, who were featured last month in this very space, have changed their name to Norvine, and their new website can be found at www.norvine.com

HARLEQUIN @ SPHINX

Sphinx BodyArt Studio in Gloucester – www.sphinxbodyart.co.uk – have a new artist starting on 29th November 2011. h4rl3qu1n (Chris) will be there on Tuesdays and Thursdays. To book an appointment or consultation please call us on 07407 402121 or email: sphinxbodyart@gmail.com, or just drop in. To see his work, visit: www.h4rl3qu1n.net.

GUEST SPOTS AVAILABLE

Evolution Tattoo in Oxford is welcoming guest artists throughout the next year. To book a spot or get more details, contact Paul on 01865 375085 or email: paul@evolutiontattoo.co.uk. Evolution are also looking for a full-time tattoo artist to work their studio. You must have a proven portfolio and minimum three years experience. No drink or drugs problems, three-month client list waiting for the right person.

REPPIN REVAMP

Reppin Ink have just finished with their studio revamp – to check out the new place, just drop by! 276 Court Rd, Mottingham. SE9 4TU. Tel : 0208 860 9141 or hit them on Facebook: sketch reppinink.

JERRY MAGNI @ TIMELESS

Mr Jerry Magni will be guesting at timeless tattoo glasgow from November 14, 2011 to December 16, 2011. www.jerrytattoo.com and www.timelesstattoos.co.uk, give us a call or pop by to make an appointment.

The Great British Tattoo Show

The website for the forthcoming Great British Tattoo Show is now live and kicking! www.britishtattooshow.com to keep abreast of what's going on!



RANDOM READER

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE MONTH

This here pic taken by Rose Conway (rosec-onway.com) is a great slice of fun. "This set of images are of Andrew Dazs, taken on Stanley Beach in Hong Kong. This was Andrew's ideal location for a shoot as a number of Bruce Lee's movies were filmed here. The complete set

of images are of Andrew practicing his art. I aimed to capture his movement and the aura of the location by utilising different colours and editing techniques. I also worked with Hong Kong body artist, Cat Creations, who painted the design on Andrew's body."

We say it's about time he got some ink done for real, but it's such a great set of photographs we couldn't resist. Check out Rose's site for some great 'proper' shots.



Tickets for the Northampton International Tattoo Convention are now on sale. The show itself runs on May 19-20, 2012, and is being hosted by Nigel Barden, of Suns and Roses Tattoo, and Dan Gold giving a wealth of experience in the tattoo industry to create a show to remember. Award-winning artists include Bob Tyrell, Benjamin Moss and Nikole Lowe to name but a few. Check out the website: www.northamptoninternationaltattooconvention.com for more details. We've got five pairs of tickets to give away too! Email: editor@skindeep.co.uk with the subject line of NORTHAMPTON and we'll throw you in the draw.

TATTOO FREEZE

It's a hair's breadth away now – for all those intending to join us for a blast of fun first thing in the new year, the Tattoo Freeze artist list has been majorly updated (and continues to be). Check in at: tattoofreeze.com for all the latest event news.



Conventions

All details correct at time of going to press.

December 29-30

MIDLETON HO HO HO TATTOO SHOW

Two Mile Inn, Midleton, Cork, Ireland
www.facebook.com/midletontattooshow

2012

January 13-15

SURF 'N' INK TATTOO CONVENTION

Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre,
 Gold Coast, Australia
www.tattoosurfink.com

January 14-15

SCOTTISH BODY ART SHOW

The Station Hotel, Perth, Scotland
www.scottishbodyart.co.uk

January 15

TATTOO FREEZE

Telford International Centre,
 Shropshire, England
www.tattoofreeze.com

January 28-29

BRIGHTON TATTOO CONVENTION

The Racecourse, Brighton, East Sussex, England
www.brightontattoo.com

February 10-12

BEST IN THE MID WEST TATTOO CONVENTION

Mid America Center, Hilton Horseshoe Casino
 Hotel, Council Bluffs, Iowa, USA
www.shaneoneillproductions.com
empiretattoo08@yahoo.com

February 19

NORTHWICH CHARITY

Tattoo & Art Expo
 Winnington Park Recreation Club,
 Northwich, Cheshire, England
www.northwichtattooexpo.co.uk

February 25-26

INTERNATIONAL TATTOO & ART

Expo Claudelands Event Centre,
 Hamilton, New Zealand
www.tattooart.co.nz

March 10-11

ROTTERDAM TATTOO CONVENTION

Rotterdam, Netherlands
www.unitedconventions.com

March 16-18

LADY LUCK TATTOO EXPO

Circus Circus Hotel & Casino, Reno,
 Nevada, USA
www.ladylucktattooexpo.com

March 25

PETERLEE'S 10TH TATTOO

Arts Festival
 Peterlee Leisure Centre
 Contact Trudy @ Eddies Tattoo Studio
 0191 5871787 or email
eddie@ehardiman.orangehome.co.uk

THE DOCTOR IS IN



Last month, we were sent a little package of Dr Numb numbing cream. In the spirit of fairplay and research, we sent a couple of 'willing participants' out in the shape of our advertising guys (Sarah and James) armed with a tube each to get some ink

To give it a fair trial and achieve some honest results, we did actually wait for both of these appointments to come around as they were both pretty big pieces that would require more than an hour or so under the needle.

To put it in perspective for you, this is far from either of their first times, so the reactions are well-rounded from an 'experience' point of view. It's a dirty job I know, they really had to be press-ganged into it... here's the results of the experiment:

JAMES

Right Bottom Leg, five-hour session, done by Mark Poole at Hoodoo Inc

I left the cream wrapped for an hour-and-a-half before the start of my session. I found that the first area to be worked on was really well numbed and made the sitting a lot more comfortable. By the time other areas of my leg where starting to be worked on, the effects had worn off slightly, but still I found it more pain free than usual. Probably better for smaller pieces on areas where the skin is thinner. All in all it made a big difference though and I'd definitely use it again.

SARAH

Left forearm, seven-hour session, done by Mirek Vel Stotker at Stotker Tattoo

I used the Dr Numb Numbing Cream on the inside of my forearm from wrist to elbow crease. The instructions on the packet are easy to follow; you simply rub the numbing cream over the area you are getting inked, let it soak into the skin, then apply another layer before wrapping with clingfilm. I did this an hour-and-a-half before my seven-hour session. I have used Emla cream before, but found I could still feel the needle.

With Dr Numb it numbed the area, especially noticeable when the wrist area and elbow crease were worked on. It did wear off slightly when parts were reworked, but really took the edge off the overall tattoo. I would recommend this product, especially for smaller delicate areas and would certainly use it again.

So there you go. You can't say fairer than an honest experiment like this to get a fair opinion of what a product is like. If you feel the need to take the edge off, Dr Numb might be the very thing...

Merry Christmas

from all of us at STARR

**On the 12 days of Christmas
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Conventions

All details correct at time of going to press.

April 1

INK & IRON TATTOO CONVENTION

The Tower, Reservoir Road, Edgbaston
Birmingham, England
www.inkandiron.co.uk

April 8-9

SOUTHEND'S FIRST INTERNATIONAL TATTOO CONVENTION

The Kursaal, Southend Sea Front
Southend-on-Sea, Essex, England
12 midday till 12 midnight (both days)
Contact Eddie Roberts on 01702 616666
www.southendtattoo.com

April 13-15

NORTH WEST TATTOO SHOW

(formerly The Killybegs Tattoo Convention)
The Abbey Hotel, Donegal Town, Ireland
Info: Ruth or Liosa from Zombie Dolls Tattoo
Parlour on 00353 74 9722440
northwesttattooshow@ireland.com

April 14-15

NORTH LAKES TATTOO SHOW

The Shepherds Inn, Carlisle,
Cumbria, England 01228 545156
www.northlaketattoo.co.uk
northlaketattoo@aol.com

April 14-15

2ND TATTOO EXTRAVAGANZA

Portsmouth Pyramids Centre
Southsea Sea Front, Portsmouth, England
All enquiries, contact Reno on 07907 009161
www.tattooextravaganza.co.uk
tattooextravaganza@live.co.uk

April 15-17

WEST COAST TATTOO SHOW

PNE Forum, Vancouver, BC, Canada
www.westcoasttattooshow.com

APRIL 21-22

GREAT BRITISH TATTOO SHOW

London Olympia, England
www.britishtattooshow.com

May 5-6

LIVERPOOL TATTOO CONVENTION

Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, England
www.tattooconvention.co.uk

May 12-13

PLYMOUTH TATTOO CONVENTION

Guildhall, Plymouth, Devon, England
www.plymouthtattooconvention.co.uk

May 19-20

NORTHAMPTON'S INTERNATIONAL TATTOO

Tea Party Rodbur Suite, Northampton
Saints Rugby Ground, England
01604 231688 or 01604 949958
sunsandrosestattoo@hotmail.com

SMALLMAN SYNDROME

I met one of my heroes recently, the wrestler Mick Foley. I've been planning on getting a tribute to him tattooed upon myself for quite some time (regular readers of this here column will be aware of this) and meeting him only underlined it further. I didn't get the chance to get it before I met him, and in many ways that's worked out for the best

It's usual to get nervous when meeting your heroes, but all of my anxiety melted away when the man-mountain that played Mankind, Dude Love and Cactus Jack walked into the dressing room at the Glee Club in Nottingham (I was supporting him on his comedy tour). He shook my hand before asking "are you the crazy SOB that has Ron Burgundy tattooed on you?" We bonded after that, and I got him to sign a piece of paper so I could include his signature in my tattoo when I get it done. That should be in plenty of time for his next visit to these shores in February, where I'll hopefully be supporting him again.

This got me thinking about signature tattoos. Have any of you guys got one of your heroes to sign something and then had it inked onto you? Maybe you got them to sign your skin and then immediately legged it to the nearest studio to have it immortalised upon yourself. Let me know if you've ever done this – and do send pictures – to the addresses below, as it's always ace to hear from you.

Users of our facebook page have drawn my attention to a lady called Cathy Ward. Unlike most 50-year-old women, Cathy is a massive fan of the vampire-based supernatural romance series *Twilight*, and has decided to mark this by spending 46 hours getting a tribute to the series etched into her back. I thought my obsession with videogames and subsequent tattoos to reflect this was fandom, but Cathy has taken it to a whole new level.

Regardless of your thoughts on the books and films (if I'm honest, they make me



want to vomit blood through my eyes), you have to admire this level of commitment to something. Even better, her story links in to the idea of signatures – as Cathy is desperate to get Robert Pattinson to sign her arm so she can have his autograph tattooed upon her. Fair play to her, but is *Twilight* that timeless a series? I mean, can it beat *Anchorman* or *Streetfighter* tattoos? I'm only



asking for... er... a friend. Yes.

Good on Cathy though, you can't fault the artwork and I'm all for anyone getting anything tattooed on them rather than just having blank skin. Can any Skin Deep readers match Cathy's dedication to one subject? I bet someone out there is reading this and has something even more crackers adorning their body. Anyone got a *Transformers* bodysuit? A backpiece dedicated to *Bridget Jones' Diary*? Every single species of monkey ever discovered tattooed in minute detail on your scalp? I want to know, so get in touch. See you next month.

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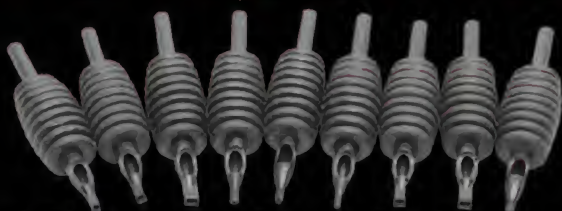
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PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK

Bondi Beach



All good things must come to an end. So it is with heavy heart, that Craigy-Lee must say goodbye to the other side of the world and begin the long trek home



So it's with a bulging suitcase and a heavy heart that I leave Australia, the place I have lived and worked for the past year. The tattoo community here is just that – a community. Becoming a part of it is like joining a big family, which I have been honoured to be a part of for the last year. I have been lucky enough to work and meet with some of the most influential artists of my generation, as well as some of the old school artists who helped get tattooing to where it is today. I hope over the last 12 months I have managed to do them all justice through the words I've written about them.

DO TRY THIS AT HOME:

Visas are quite easy to get hold of to work in Australia. If you are aged

between 18 and 30, a working holiday visa is valid for one year and they usually get granted in a few days. One-way flights from the UK are around £800. We flew into Perth, but you can fly into any of the main city international airports (Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane) as all are around the same price. Buy a Lonely Planet guide as this has become invaluable as a gauge for things during our trip.

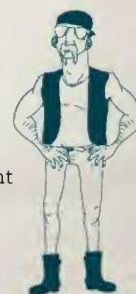
DO YOUR RESEARCH:

A lot of shops in Australia are still run by bikies, so do your research and find out who owns the shop before you decide you want to work there. During our time here, two studios were burnt out and an artist was shot dead in another. Don't let this scare you off as these are not

targeted at random people – just be careful where you end up working. A lot of studios don't have websites, so phone the shop and get their email or postal address to send your portfolio to them. The conventions over here are generally very good, however booths are quite expensive compared to shows in Europe. Be prepared to pay for all the extras like lighting in your booth and a work table. If you are working in Queensland, you are required to do the TAFE course on infectious control and sterilisation.

GETTING AROUND:

We bought a car from the government car auctions. Most major cities have these if you Google it. Alternatively you can rent a car, if you are going to drive make sure you realise the





Obsession Ink



Me with Lucky

NailZ, Pip, Mez, Me, Luke at True Love Tattoo



distances and give yourself plenty of time. Australia looks small on a map but in reality, it's enormous. Take out good insurance in case of a breakdown and be careful whilst driving at dusk and dawn as this is when 90 per cent of people hit kangaroos. Public transport in the big cities is generally pretty good and you can get internal flights through Jetstar, Tiger or Virgin Australia very cheaply. For cheap motels, I would suggest www.wotif.com. Though read reviews on www.tripadvisor.com as the hotel/ motel rating system does not seem to be very consistent throughout the country.

The Aussie way of life is certainly laid-back, friendly, and a warm

welcome will greet any stranger. Most tattooers I have met have been keen to grab a beer, some food and chat enthusiastically about art, techniques, tools and all other array of things that help and improve their tattooing. And this is why there is so much awesome work coming out of here.

There sure are a lot of shops with new ones popping up all the time across the country, some people say too many. However, I feel the decent shops will stand the test of time as the general public slowly become more educated between good and bad tattoos. Tattooing in my opinion is a service industry and

the consumer is king. Sure, everyone has the right to tattoo, but the public also have the right to a good tattoo done in a sterile environment. So with such great talent emerging across the country, I think there will be a transition period that will see a lot of shops close due to lack of business. Ultimately this will see some old and long running studios close their doors, but if you don't move with the times, you will only get left behind.

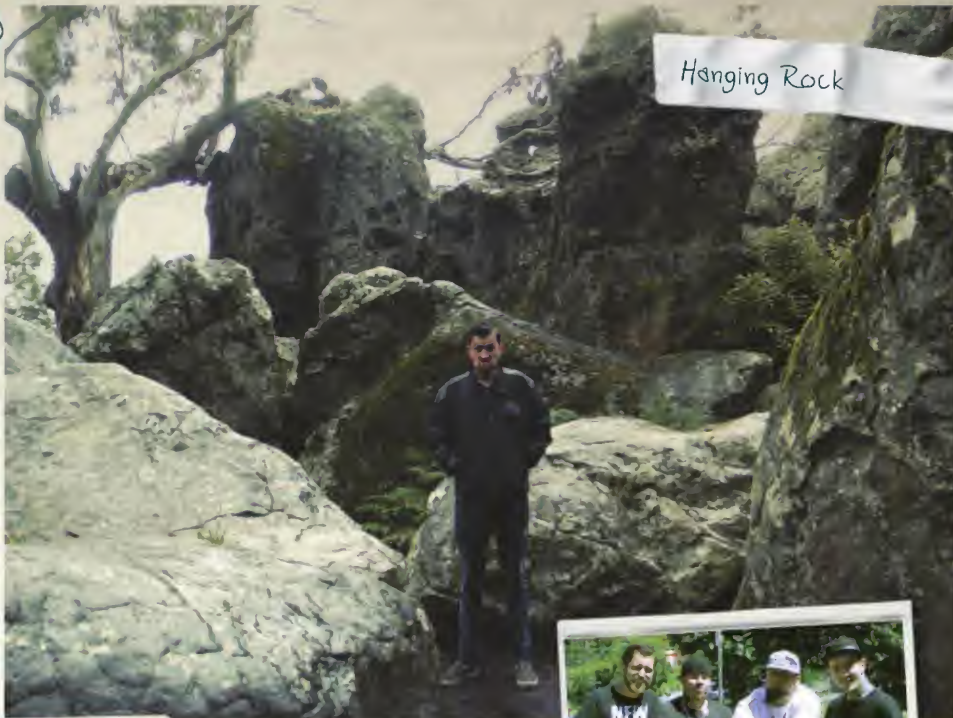
Meeting and talking with some of Australia's old school (a few of which I can now call friends) has been an extreme highlight and privilege for 🍷





me. Personally, I think more artists should take the time to chat with the old timers and learn a little about how things used to be. It's these people that have helped push the industry forward and get it to where it is today, which benefits all us younger artists. I think it has helped me get a good grip on reality, and while I have never really been one to have an attitude or ego, it has definitely helped me remember what we as tattooers actually do and keep my feet firmly on the ground.

The days of long hours and hard graft with poor equipment is disappearing and a new generation of artists who pick and choose what they tattoo has emerged – though I hope this will never fully replace the walk-in vibe and the experience



Hanging Rock



Holdfast Street

of an old school street shop.

One thing I have learnt during this year is how quickly time passes by. It seems like only last week we were planning the daunting task of driving across Australia, and now some 45,000km later, it's over. So make the most of it and remember... life's not about the destination, but the journey that takes you there. Grab it with both hands, enjoy the ride, have a very Merry Christmas and make the most of 2012!

As a final note on Picnic at Hanging Rock, I'd like to hand out a massive thanks to Craigy for delivering this feature



The Happy Dayze Crew

brilliantly and consistently over the last 12 months. Sometimes it hasn't always been easy technology-wise to pull off, but it still kept coming and I think Skin Deep has been a better place for this input.

FAVOURITE AUSSIE ARTISTS:

John Entwistle
Mick Squires
Bugsy
Dave Underd

FAVOURITE SHOPS:

True Love, QLD
Holdfast, WA
Korpus, VIC
Happy Dayze, Vic

UP AND COMING ARTISTS TO LOOK OUT FOR:

Tahnee Claire
Alex Bock
Max Fecondo
Kitty Ross

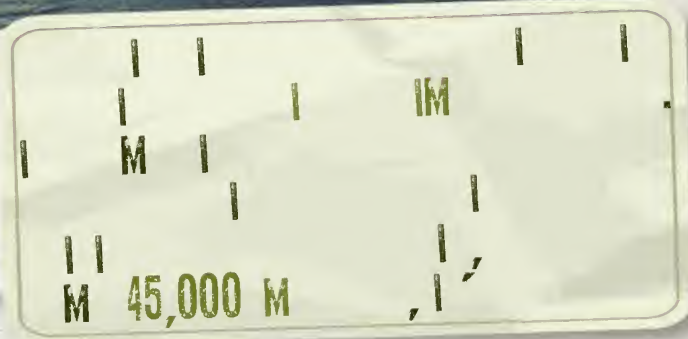
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CRÈME ANESTHÉSIQUE TOPIQUE

the flower girl

Laura Kuy is a tattoo collector who, like her star sign, is wrapped in duality. Starting life in heavy metal bands and running around the streets of New York, Laura now owns and runs a very busy, successful flower shop in London; Laura Kuy Flowers. And just like her life, her tattoos have changed their style and path over the years

I'm from East London originally. My Dad was in quite a famous band called The Outlaws. The original members were Ritchie Blackmore (Deep Purple), Reg Hawkins and Chas Hodges (Chaz and Dave). The band was conceived by the timeless and amazing pioneering British producer, Joe Meek, who ended up killing himself and his landlady when millions of pounds of royalties were not rightfully paid to him. This was for his hit 'Telstar', by the Tornados, which my Dad penned with him. A film, called Telstar, was released in 2008 starring Kevin Spacey and Pam Ferris. Shaun Evans plays my Dad, Billy Kuy.

The reason for this story is to show why my family are all musically talented. My Dad was this amazing musician and he passed on these all-round musical abilities to me. I play piano at grade 5, as well as the violin, and of course, I sing. I was once in a metal band called Abbatoir who sang heavy metal Abba songs no less!

Hanging out in the music, gig and metal scene was where I found my love for ink. My first tattoo was when I was 16. It was on my right shoulder, but it's now covered up. It was two naked ladies in a world with stars. It signified the Gemini duality sign, which is me. My sister actually chose it for me and my Mum bought it as my birthday present.

I moved to New York for two years where I worked for Mayor Bloomberg and the Ritz Carlton Hotel. I also



MY DAD WAS THIS AMAZING MUSICIAN AND HE PASSED ON THESE ALL ROUND MUSICAL ABILITIES TO ME. I PLAY PIANO AT GRADE 5, AS WELL AS THE VIOLIN AND OF COURSE, I SING

worked on films where I met people like Susan Sarandon, Jude Law and Macauley Culkin. I would spend, my then double dollar to the pound, earnings on clothes, gigs and tattoos.

When I was in New York, I started my arm tattoo. First some small purple flowers on my wrist, then more cherry blossom; a butterfly at the base of my spine, then my calf done with a hot blue and white butterfly with a face in it. And it was all completely on a whim. I walked past this tattoo shop down on West 8th Street. Saw it, loved it, got it done. It was \$175 (about £85) and I love it.

Some funny things happened while I was over there. Once, my friend and I were in downtown Manhattan one evening. We walked into a tattoo shop and the two dudes in there were on some kind of drug or drunk or something. Anyway, they talked us into getting a tattoo each. We both put \$20 deposit down. As we walked out, we looked at each other and felt really uneasy. "I don't trust them" I said to her. It just didn't feel right. As we turned the corner, we saw the wind bluster something down the street. As we chased after it we noticed it was green. Two bills – \$20 bills! It was a sign. We got our \$40 and we never went back there.

When I moved back to London I met Kanae, the most beautiful and talented Japanese tattooist. Such a warm, clever and just plain amazing tattooist – who, if you moan, smiles sweetly, asks you if you're OK, then 🍷

THEY TALKED US INTO GETTING A TATTOO EACH. WE BOTH PUT \$20 DEPOSIT DOWN. AS WE WALKED OUT, WE LOOKED AT EACH OTHER AND FELT REALLY UNEASY



carries on tenfold with a cute grin. Kanae has just opened her own shop in Old Street, Nine Tails Tattoo, with co-founder Mie. She used to work at The Family Business with Mo Copoletta. I can see Nine Tails is going to be a huge success, I am sure of it. She did all of my back, except for the peacock and the butterfly; she did these amazing large chrysanthemums and three bright orange marigolds right on my hip/bum cheek... ouch!

The peacock on my back was tattooed by Naomi Smith of New Skool Tattoos in Epsom. Naomi is a blonde tattooed beaut, she is really cute. I'm not sure how many hours I've had, but it has been a lot. I find singing whilst getting inked definitely helps me to work through the pain. I love Alter Bridge, Queen, Danzig; stuff I can relax with and know all the words to. It's the breathing thing that controls the pain I reckon. I also love to eat sweets or chew chewing gum and call my friends and talk rubbish – most of the time I can't remember what we've spoken about or what

SO MOST OF MY
WORK IS FLOWERS!
AS YOU CAN GUESS,
MY LOVE FOR MY JOB
AND THE ARTISTRY AND
BEAUTY OF THEM MEANS
I GET TO LOOK AT THEM
ALL DAY EVERY DAY

secrets I've let out what with all the adrenalin going. Who knows what treasures I divulge.

So most of my work is flowers. As you can guess, my love for my job and the artistry and beauty of them means I gladly get to look at them all day every day – and when I'm at home with my clothes off, I get to admire them again, in a completely different way!

I love the brotherhood of tattooed people and have complete respect for ladies especially who endure back pieces. And anything on the foot, well I tell you, that's admirable... it's pretty sore down there. 🐘





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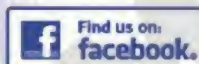
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MEGATROND

During an attempt to sell his drawings Trond Kjørkleiv was instead offered a job as a tattooist. A year and a half later, just after having completed his first tattoo, he became known as MegaTrond and was put in charge for the Leading Light studio in Sandnes, outside Stavanger in Norway

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IT ALL HAPPENED FAST FOR MEGATROND ONCE IT STARTED. IN SCHOOL HE STUDIED ART AND DESIGN AND NEVER REALLY HAD ANY THOUGHTS ABOUT BECOMING A TATTOO ARTIST. THEN ONE DAY HE GOT A TIP FROM A CLASSMATE.

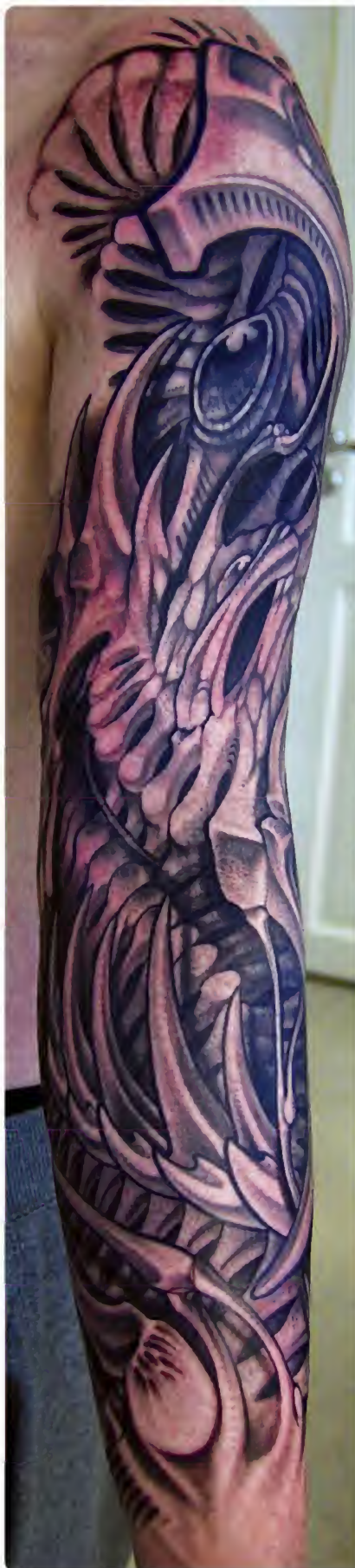
He told me there was a rumour that tattoo studios were buying art so I decided to give it a try. Jag brought a whole bunch of drawings and went from studio to studio. A couple of days later Leading Light in Stavanger called and offered me a job. The only job I'd had up until then was picking strawberries during one summer so I accepted.

THE YEAR WAS 2000 AND AFTER A SIX-MONTH APPRENTICESHIP HE STARTED TATTOOING FOR REAL.

I started on skin straight away, so I had to call in a friend of mine to tattoo on. I did a tribal since I think it's the best style to begin with. It's relatively easy and you learn how to do nice outlines, shading and so on.

A YEAR OR SO LATER HE GOT HIS OWN FIRST TATTOO. UNLIKE MOST OF HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE BUSINESS HIS CHOICE OF PROFESSION WASN'T A RESULT OF A MASSIVE INTEREST IN TATTOOS, IN HINDSIGHT SOMETHING HE'S PRETTY CONTENT WITH.

Tattoo artists normally have the ugliest tattoos. Today I'm really glad I didn't do that crap when I was young. You don't know what you want then. The first tattoo I had made was





an old school star on my ankle. I wanted something small. After that I continued on my legs and when I was 19 I had a back piece, which I'm still very happy with. It did however take me seven years to start on my arms and I still have the whole left arm untouched.

AS WITH HIS OWN WORK, HE'S CHOSEN A VARIATION OF STYLES TO COVER HIS OWN BODY, ALTHOUGH HE PERSONALLY PREFERS TWO STYLES.

In the beginning I really liked black and grey, Paul Booth, demons, skulls and that kind of stuff. Then one day I discovered colour and everything you can do with it. Today I do mainly Japanese and new school, but I see myself as fairly all-round. I want to be able to do everything, from portraits to tribals. As long as I can do it my way I will do anything. I might not be 100 percent custom. Sometimes people come in with drawings, but they always walk out with something different. It can be the same concept but I rarely tattoo an image straight up. That's the beauty with being an artist, to be able to play around with images.

AT FIRST HE WORKED ALONGSIDE SCHOOL WITH THE IDEA BEING TO GO ON TO UNIVERSITY, BUT THERE WAS A CHANGE OF PLANS.

I noticed I could make money doing this and I saw the potential. My plan was to study advertising or something at the university. Looking back however, I wouldn't trade this job for anything. It's the best job in the world for someone with an artistic talent. You get to work with your hobby and you can provide for your family doing it, especially if you've made a name for yourself. It's a bit of a dream.

NOT LONG AFTER HIS FIRST BODILY ORNAMENTATION HE MADE THE MOVE FROM STAVANGER TO THE SUBURB OF SANDNES. WITH THAT CAME A WHOLE LOT MORE RESPONSIBILITY.

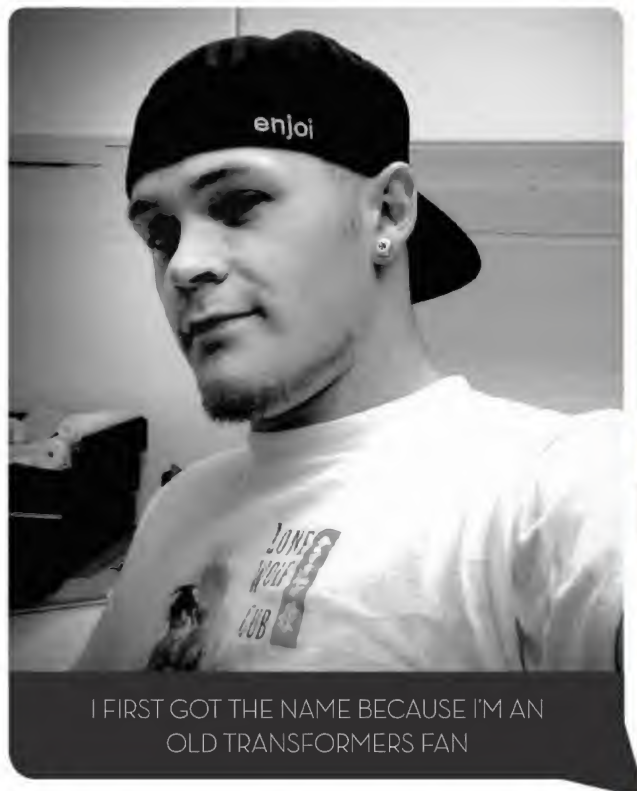
I had only worked at the studio in Stavanger for a year and a half when they sent me to Leading Light in Sandnes. The guy who worked there quit and suddenly I was responsible 🙄



for the whole studio. It had a good reputation that we needed to uphold; it was frightening and I felt a lot of pressure, but in the end it turned out really well.

LIKE SO MANY OTHER TATTOO ARTISTS, MEGATROND PAINTS, WHEN HE HAS THE CHANCE AT LEAST.

I've taken a couple of courses and tried to understand how to use colours in painting, but it's something you need to put aside time for. Since I became a Dad that's been harder to do. It takes a lot of energy, but sometimes I paint in the studio, like when I get a cancellation. I actually did an exhibition a couple of years back, through a course I was taking. I sold out in a week, but I've been too lazy to follow that up.



HE'S NOT TOO LAZY FOR CONVENTIONS, THOUGH. AS A TRADITION HE ATTENDS THE CONVENTIONS IN BERLIN, OSLO AND STAVANGER EACH YEAR, AND THERE'S NO DOUBT WHICH IS HIS FAVOURITE ONE.

Stavanger is the best convention in Europe for us tattooists. It's small and the artists are well taken care of. They organise hotels and stuff like that, we get three hot meals per day in addition to the ubiquitous buffet and we're all fully booked for the weekend after just four, five hours.

FINALLY, TO ROUND THINGS UP, HOW DID THE NAME MEGATROND COME ABOUT?

I first got the name because I'm an old Transformers fan. Then, a few years ago, a friend of mine, who was working for a tattoo magazine, wrote an article about the convention in Oslo where he included a picture of one of my tattoos. In the caption he wrote MegaTrond. My gut reaction was 'no, no, no', but then I realised that my last name, Kjörkleiv, is pretty hard to spell. This name is more international! 🐼





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JACK KEROUAC

Veterinary clinics, hospitals, schools, residential buildings, restaurants, shops and galleries. In the culturally abundant city of San Francisco, street art is everywhere – art influenced by the city's tattoo artists and their open-minded clients, and is basically impossible to avoid, even if you want to...

San Francisco, a city with an almost mythical glow to it, has been in the forefront for political and social change since the gold rush days in the 1800s. Beatniks hung out here in the '50s; hippies, alongside gays and the Black Panthers, made the Bay Area their base during the flower power movement in the '60s and throughout the '70s.

Today San Francisco has a flourishing cultural scene, including everything from music and graffiti, to theatre and fine arts. In this bustling city it's never been hard to find talented tattoo artists.

"It's San Francisco, man. You can throw a rock in any direction and you will find at the very least a descent or great tattoo shop. I was talking to a friend from the East Coast who found

it crazy that anywhere he went, he'd find amazing tattoo shops. The bar is set very high and our clients expect us to bring our A-game," says Nick Chaboya.



THE BEATS (I)

Jack Kerouac introduced the phrase 'Beat Generation' in 1948, generalising from his social circle to characterise the underground, anti-conformist youth gathering in New York at that time. The name came up in conversation with the novelist John Clellon Holmes who published an early Beat Generation novel, *Go* (1952), along with a manifesto in *The New York Times Magazine*: 'This is the Beat Generation'. In 1954, Nolan Miller published his third novel, *Why I Am So Beat*, detailing the weekend parties of four students.



YOU CAN THROW A ROCK IN ANY DIRECTION
AND YOU WILL FIND AT THE VERY LEAST A DESCENT
OR GREAT TATTOO SHOP

"If you go to, for instance, San José or Philadelphia, you'd probably say that you'd find the most art in this or that neighbourhood, but in San Francisco, it's in the whole city. From the murals in the Mission to the art walks downtown, when all the galleries are open at the same time. It's everywhere."

The Mission district is probably the best part of

San Francisco if you're into street art, and is my personal favourite area due to its Latin heritage, which means five Mexican restaurants and a couple of other ethnic food places on every block. Every time I visit California's fourth biggest city, I see to it that I walk down the mural alley between the area's main streets, Valencia and Mission – a hidden gem between 17th and 18th where basically every vertical surface is covered in high-class street art. For the last four years, at least, it's looked the same, which is amazing in itself since a place like that would never be left untouched in my hometown. But this trip, someone has managed to desecrate most of the pieces. I still have to recommend it 🙄



George



THE BEATS (II)

The adjective 'beat' was introduced to the group by Herbert Huncke, though Kerouac expanded the meaning of the term. Beat came from underworld slang – the world of hustlers, drug addicts and petty thieves, where Allen Ginsberg and Kerouac sought inspiration. Beat was slang for 'beaten down' or down-trodden, but to Kerouac and Ginsberg, it also had a spiritual connotation as in 'beatitude'. Kerouac felt he had identified (and was the embodiment of) a new trend analogous to the influential Lost Generation.



Doug and Ed





Nick

though, since there are a lot of good untouched pieces left and I hope it will soon be restored to its former glory.

"San Francisco is culturally diverse and very friendly," says Tanja Nixx, at Lyle Tuttle Tattoo. "It's like a big city in a small format and there are more possibilities to develop than in Hannover, where I'm from. It's easier to express yourself here. You don't need papers or a degree like in Europe, you can be who you are. I don't think I would have become a tattoo artist if I'd stayed in Germany."

The openness is something that everybody I talk to seems to come back to, and it's an openness that brought a lot of tattoo artists to the city. One of the first really famous ones was Ed Hardy, who after some years in San Diego, realised the potential of San Francisco in the '70s and in 1977 opened up Ed Hardy's Tattoo City in the Mission. Today it's located across the street from Lyle Tuttle Tattoo in North Beach.

"San Francisco has always been a bohemian centre and a centre for

social change, ever since the gold rush days and then with the beatniks. It's also been a magnet for talented tattoo artists. It's like art school, where being surrounded by talented people makes you improve."

"I think the San Francisco style is infinite diversity," his son, Doug Hardy, adds. Since 2009 he works in his Dad's shop while Ed Hardy himself is retired.

"Everyone here is an expert at that and you can see the difference between East Coast and West Coast tattoos," Doug continues. "Here tattoo artists are constantly reinventing themselves and pushing the limits."

One reason for being this magnet according to Ed Hardy, is the people living here. The customers have somewhat put the tattoo artists of San Francisco in the forefront.

"This place can be pretty 'out



Lyle Tuttle Tattoo

SAN FRANCISCO HAS ALWAYS BEEN A BOHEMIAN CENTRE AND A CENTRE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE, EVER SINCE THE GOLD RUSH DAYS AND THEN WITH THE BEATNIKS. IT'S ALSO BEEN A MAGNET FOR TALENTED TATTOO ARTISTS



THE BEATS (III)

In her memoir, *Minor Characters*, Joyce Johnson described how the stereotype was absorbed into American culture - the Beat Generation sold books, sold black turtleneck sweaters, bongos, berets and dark glasses, sold a way of life that seemed like dangerous fun - thus to be either condemned or imitated. Suburban couples could have beatnik parties on Saturday nights, drink too much and fondle each other's wives.

there' and the tattooists are really inventive," explains Ed, "but it takes a certain clientele to be able to be inventive. They make the artists become a bit more ground breaking."

George Campise agrees: "San Francisco has a decent history of custom tattooing and even if you're covered in tattoos here, you can still get a good job. You can be a businessman and show up in a boardroom with tattoos. Therefore you see more tattoos and people want to get what they see. The customers here are pretty well educated."

If you compare the street art in San Francisco with other cities you see one big difference. There isn't nearly as much 'classic' graffiti, but instead more of a mix. The interest in tattoos among citizens and the high quality of tattooists have on the other hand, made its mark in the art scene, especially the street art scene, where the feeling you often get is more that of twisted cartoons. An art form a lot of today's tattoo artists are influenced by.

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Agneszka Hairesis

THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

Some things come under the banner of 'total no-brainer'. Paul Booth and Hans Giger together at Giger's very own museum in the Swiss Alps? We were at the airport before they had even completed the press statement...



The H.R. Giger Museum is based in the beautiful, medieval town of Gruyères located on top of a hill at the foot of Swiss Alps. It's quite easy to get there from Geneva Airport; taking a train that arcs around the northern shore of Lake Geneva will offer you some scenic views too. From the train station it's a nice walk up and downhill, though it's not so nice if you're wearing heels, pulling a big suitcase, carrying a heavy bag with a camera around your neck – in which case, I thoroughly recommend waiting for a bus.

The museum showcases Giger's largest collection consisting of his paintings, sculptures, film and furniture designs dating from the early 1960s to the present day. The top floor of the museum, with stunning views of the town and surrounding landscape, also houses Giger's private art collection which includes remarkable pieces from Andre Lassen, Burland Francois, Joe Coleman, Rudolf Stussi, Martin Swarz, Steven Leyba and others.

The gloomy, skeletal interior of the famous H.R. Giger Museum Bar is found in the adjoining wing of the



IN MY MID-TEENS, I SPENT COUNTLESS HOURS OBSESSED WITH TRYING TO UNDERSTAND AND EMULATE GIGER'S ART. HIS BOOKS WERE ONE OF MY GREATEST TEACHERS OF THE FEW I HAD

museum complex and welcomes you into a new reality where biomechanical surrealism isn't so surreal anymore... entering that place feels like walking into a masterpiece and living it for a moment.

Whilst this is all very cool to experience first hand, we are here for something a little more: The Paul Booth Art Exhibition. Paul's selection of work, showcased for the first time in Switzerland, presents an evolution of his artwork over the past ten years – in paint, mixed



OPENING RECEPTION FROM LEFT - H.R. GIGER, LESLIE A. BARANY, PAUL BOOTH



media and tattoo. And

what an astonishing collection that is.

"In my mid-teens, I spent countless hours obsessed with trying to understand and emulate Giger's art. His books were one of my greatest teachers of the few I had. It has such unrelenting force. In my own way, I have always tried to do the same, as that to me is a crucial element to artistic expression. "Giger is the reason that light and shade, dimension and texture have always been a major focus

for me in my art – whether it be on canvas, skin, or otherwise. Now I find myself, 30 years later, honoured to be showing my art in Giger's museum. I suppose I chose to treat this show somewhat as a timeline, because it represents a culmination in my life's work thus far. While it closes a circle for me historically, it simultaneously marks the beginning of an entirely new era, as I can only evolve from this experience. I can't even imagine where I will go from here and I think that is what has me most excited." 🙌



ALICIA MUSSON, ARTIST: ADAM COLLINS STUDIO, NEW WAVE TATTOO, LONDON



GIGER IS THE REASON THAT LIGHT AND SHADE, DIMENSION AND TEXTURE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A MAJOR FOCUS FOR ME IN MY ART - WHETHER IT BE ON CANVAS, SKIN, OR OTHERWISE. NOW I FIND MYSELF, 30 YEARS LATER, HONoured TO BE SHOWING MY ART IN GIGER'S MUSEUM

I turned up with high expectations and every single one of them were exceeded. Even though I've seen most of the presented pieces somewhere online, it felt like I was seeing each for the very first time. I was under the same impression while starring at Giger's designs. We all know both artists' works, but do we, really? If this trip has taught me anything, it is that you cannot truly appreciate nor experience the art until you're facing it in the flesh.

Today's masterpieces are being slaughtered daily by pixels and the brutal flattening by our glossy



MUSEUM BAR HR GIGER





I NEED TO EXPRESS MYSELF. THIS IS LIKE A THERAPY TO WORK OUT MY FRUSTRATIONS

screens. Unspoken emotions painted between the brush strokes are being lost somewhere in the electronic transition. No photography or video, even of the highest quality, will ever do justice to the colour, detail and texture that springs out of Booth's work. Every line, shape and shade is carefully planned – his attention to detail and use of light and shadow is mind-blowing.

Entering a room with his paintings hung on the walls is like becoming part of a weird, evil ecosystem where your mind is being absorbed by the art you're staring at. It's a controversial and beautifully disturbing collection with the power to change the way you interact with your surroundings, bringing back the eternal question – who am I and where am I going?

When asked about his art, Paul said: "I need to express myself. This is like a therapy to work out my frustrations." He also mentioned that he doesn't paint when he's in a good mood.

The opening reception was a big

success and turnout was pretty impressive. At one point, the gallery became so crowded that it actually took a while before you could get to see some pieces. It's amazing to be in one room hearing so many different languages. Even though you might not understand the 🐛





ART FUSION EXPERIMENT - FROM LEFT - SABINE GAFFRON, FLIP LAU, TITINE LAU, PAUL BOOTH

comments, you can still recognise the excitement and admiration in visitor's voices.

I also had the great pleasure of meeting Paul's mother, Paula, as well as his daughter, Tabitha, such lovely people. Tabby is working on a solo music project and no surprise, she also paints. Remember that name – Tabitha – because I'm certain that we will be hearing more about her soon.

I feel truly blessed to be able to witness Paul Booth – master of macabre and dark arts – meeting H.R. Giger – master of biomechanical art and fantastic surrealism – who wouldn't! Both artists in the same room at the same time in the very heart of the Alien's nest? This does not happen very often – in fact it doesn't happen at all. It's pretty incredible and I believe this is one of the most important art and tattoo related

IT'S PRETTY INCREDIBLE AND I BELIEVE THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ART AND TATTOO RELATED EVENTS OF THE PAST DECADE





events of the past decade!

As a cherry on the top to make this day even more meaningful and unforgettable, we all watched as extraordinary pieces of art were being created in front of our eyes by four extremely talented artists: Paul Booth, Filip Lau, Titine Lau and Sabine Gaffron. After a few hours of their collaborative work (musically accompanied by Ajja S.F. Leu), ArtFusion Experiment's baby was

born. The work will remain in the museum for the entire duration of Paul's exhibit until March 2012.

AFE is a charitable and tattoo-centric art movement co-founded by Paul, Titine and Filip. It brings together artists from around the world in order to create something unique by combining each individual's personal style to come together in a single piece, thus allowing each artist to learn

from the others at the same time. Completed works are then auctioned, with proceeds going to local charities that support the arts for disadvantaged children. 🐼

WE ALL WATCHED AS EXTRAORDINARY
PIECES OF ART WERE BEING CREATED IN
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TALENTED ARTISTS: PAUL BOOTH, FILIP LAU,
TITINE LAU AND SABINE GAFFRON

PAUL BOOTH'S COLLECTION



SOME KIND OF WONDERFUL

It is Artist Friday at Tattoo Jam 2011 and five of the world's most recognisable and talented artists are having a head-to-head paint-off, an on the spot demonstration of their painting skills. The audience is stunned into silence watching these five tattooists slinging paint, starting with a blank canvas and ending up with some amazing art work...



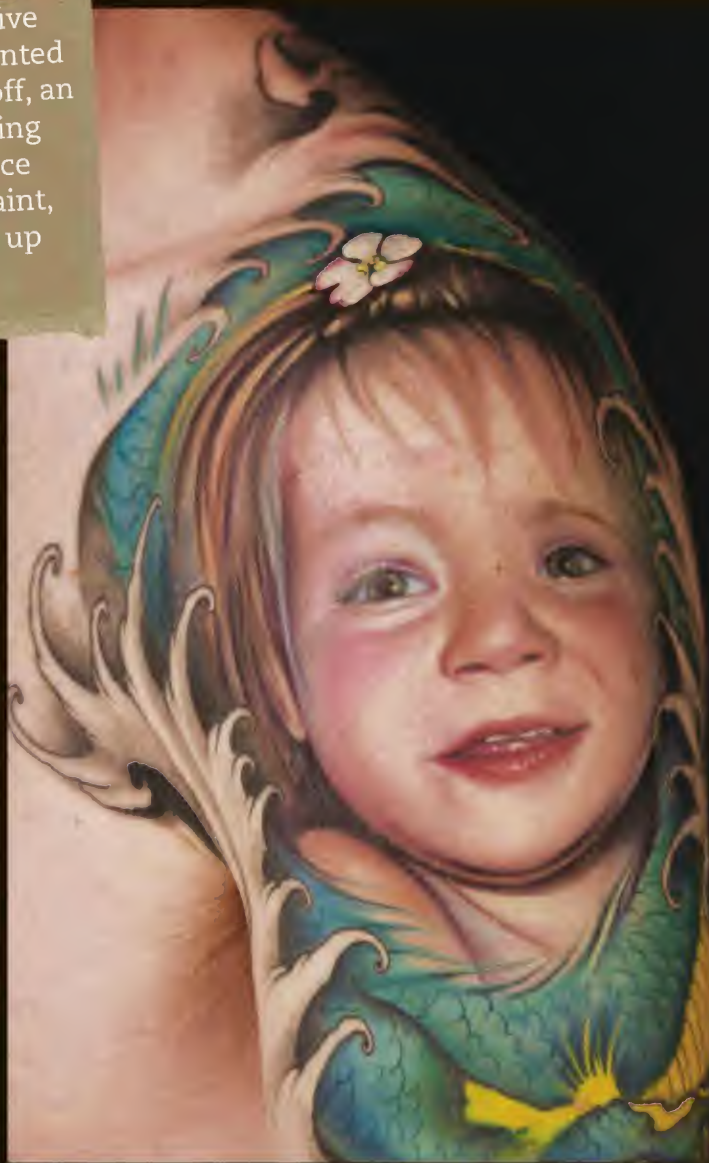
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One of those artists was Jeff Gogue, world renowned tattooist and painter. Watching Jeff work, whether it is on skin or on canvas, is a very rare treat and Jeff did not disappoint.

Born in Quincy, California, this self-taught tattoo artist quickly climbed the ranks in the tattoo world, working tirelessly and passionately to get to the top. But as always, there is a bigger picture behind the artist, and following Tattoo Jam, we caught up with him to hear his side of the story.

"I started tattooing at the age of 26, which was in August 1999. I taught myself at home and only did it part-time until August 2000

Trent Aitken-Smith © Jeff Gogue



when I rented a small shop and began tattooing full-time. I lived in a small town in northern California called Quincy, where I was born and raised. I was married with two young daughters and a son, who was born in June of 2000.

"I would go get small tattoos in Reno Nevada and Chico, California –

both an hour-and-a-half drive from Quincy. I would ask questions while I was getting work done. It was very difficult to get any information or help. I was continuously told I needed to clean toilets and scrub tubes for three years in order to learn how to tattoo. It didn't make sense to me. I wasn't an 18-year-



I WOULD ASK QUESTIONS WHILE I WAS GETTING WORK DONE. IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO GET ANY INFORMATION OR HELP. I WAS CONTINUOUSLY TOLD I NEEDED TO CLEAN TOILETS AND SCRUB TUBES FOR THREE YEARS IN ORDER TO LEARN HOW TO TATTOO. IT DIDN'T MAKE SENSE TO ME

old kid wanting to be a cool tattoo guy. I wasn't dating strippers and partying every night. I was close to 30, in major debt from having back surgery and losing my job over it. I had three kids and was trying to survive and provide for my family.

"I was in a small town of about 5,000 people and knew that I'd have

to get good enough to draw out-of-town clients in order to keep things going. I struggled for the first couple years with lots of downtime. I would fill it with sign painting, lettering and painting on local race cars, sprint cars, helmets and motorcycles. I would draw logos or design T-shirts for local businesses. I

would basically do anything possible to pay the bills. I even raised chickens and rabbits and would go fishing for food for my family. We were broke and lived in a double wide run down trailer. I've always worked hard... it just took a while to work out."

Jeff's shop is newly open, his 🙌





FROM MR GOGUE'S BLOG

From Mr Gogue's blog at gogueart.blogspot.com - what he has to say is so important, I felt it was worth repeating again in print.

October 25, 2011: It's 4 am on October 25, 2011. I'm in the airport in Rome and my body is tired. I just spent three days with a small group of friends speaking at a conference about staging a rebellion against mediocrity in our field; art and tattoos. I find myself saying it in separate terms though I don't see the separation.

Tattooing is a form of art of course, but the trade of tattooing has meandered through the avenues of the average and the common for most of it's modern existence. Rome. What an appropriate place in the world to do such a thing; surrounded by the epitome of high standards in art and dedication to one's craft.

As I walked through the streets, the humorous attempts by vendors to sell trinkets made in china, bobble headed pope statues, disco-style hand-held laser pointers, and plastic miniatures of the colosseum reminded me that the majority of the population remains in the realm of the average and the addicted to mediocrity. Graffiti and trash were everywhere obnoxiously stating that so many people consume and discard, rather than contribute and nurture.

work ethic and desire to succeed firmly established, he hits the road to follow the conventions across America. Quickly, the awards start piling up and Jeff starts to build a reputation as one of the best artists in his field... as well as meet some cool people along the way.

"I attended my first tattoo convention in 2000 and met Don Ed Hardy and watched people like Deano Cook, Paul Booth and Jack Rudy work. I wanted to be one of those guys. I wanted to travel and see the world and do art full-time. I worked my first show in Reno Nevada in 2002. I was so

I ATTENDED MY FIRST TATTOO CONVENTION IN 2000 AND MET DON ED HARDY AND WATCHED PEOPLE LIKE DEANO COOK, PAUL BOOTH AND JACK RUDY WORK. I WANTED TO BE ONE OF THOSE GUYS



nervous I lined up my friends to tattoo them for free so I wouldn't be sitting there doing nothing. I took a couple seminars and was really disappointed in how little information was being shared; it made me really want to get good enough to be able to conduct my own seminar.

"I worked my ass off for the next few years attending at least a convention each month and entering lots of contests. By 2003, I was winning awards and climbing up the mountain. By 2007 things were going great. I had won awards all over the US and some international shows like Milan and London. I got featured in many magazines and started doing my own seminars at conventions.

"During this time, in 2004, I moved north to a small town in Southern Oregon called Grants Pass. It's a



I WORKED MY ASS OFF FOR THE
NEXT FEW YEARS ATTENDING AT
LEAST A CONVENTION EACH MONTH
AND ENTERING LOTS OF CONTESTS

beautiful place in the Rogue Valley with rivers, mountains, friendly people and beautiful weather. I have a gallery and studio in the town centre and amazing support of the local community. People here treat me like something of a local celebrity. They see me traveling and working, they see the magazines and online attention. It's still just tattoos to them and they only really see a fraction of what's going on in my world, but they all seem excited and inspired just the same."

You would think after all this hard work that Jeff would sit back, relax and enjoy seeing his studio grow. Not Jeff. Maybe it was the hard slog getting there or maybe 🍌



it is just the love he has for what he does. Either way, in Jeff's mind it was time to move onto another passion of his – painting.

"My mom, also an artist, always told me I could do anything I wanted and encouraged me to do art since as long as I can remember. I have always strived to be able to draw and always wanted to paint. I started painting in 2005 after realising I was often duplicating paintings like Gil Elvgren and Frank Frazetta in the tattoos I was doing.

"I began painting just like I approached tattoos. After doing about 20 paintings I started attending a local art academy – The Southern Oregon Art Academy – in 2006. I would do figure drawing every Thursday morning and paint in the afternoon. I did that once a week for 14 months. It was invaluable to my career.

"I have now been a guest instructor there at the academy and they have produced an oil painting instructional DVD called the Business of Painting. I teach tattoo seminars all over the world and have also taught at the summer

I WOULD DO FIGURE DRAWING EVERY THURSDAY MORNING AND PAINT IN THE AFTERNOON. I DID THAT ONCE A WEEK FOR 14 MONTHS. IT WAS INVALUABLE TO MY CAREER



FROM MR GOGUE'S BLOG (II)

I'm sitting here with a headache from the two hours sleep I struggled through since I haven't been here long enough to get over the jet lag, yet I'm heading back home already. I often find myself sort of reveling in being tired. In my case it's more often the result of being somewhere in the world that most people would say is a trip of a lifetime. I find myself routinely resolving as the plane takes off; that if it goes down in flames, I am satisfied that I have had many many trips of a lifetime, and that my family and friends will know that I tried with all my heart, to live well, to experience more, and to inspire others to do the same.

art program at Rogue Community College in Grants Pass.

"I have a love for teaching and inspiring artists to reach their own personal potential. I have always believed in the concept of sharing information and furthering the subculture and industry of tattooing and painting – all artistry in general which translates to our role in society. If we aren't contributing to society then we are consuming it and leaving only waste. I believe we have short lives and we should give everything we can while we are here. I think that it's our responsibility. I could just hole up in my own world and do art for me, but I prefer to share it both in my own work and in teaching. Sharing information has



I LOVE TO BRING THE VIEWER IN CLOSER THAN THEY'D EXPECT, OR INTO A VULNERABLE PLACE. I ALSO LIKE TO DISPLAY A LEVEL OF SKILL THAT SHOWS EXPERTISE WITHOUT OVERSTATING MY ABILITY, WHICH COMES ACROSS AS INSECURITY TO ME

a far reaching effect on the world around me and inspires more people to do the same. That influence can't really be measured. I can just be fulfilled knowing that I have mattered to the people around me and I have left an impression enough that people want more out of their lives and their art."

Jeff's paintings are unique. He takes the usual subjects and transforms them into something completely different. And it is the small subtleties in his work that seem to make the biggest impact.

"My main goal in my art is to have a striking suggestion of things without overdoing or over-rendering all the details. I always want the viewer to play a large role in completing the image with their own imagination. I like to leave things either diffused or off the canvas. I love to bring the viewer in closer than they'd expect, or into a vulnerable place. I also like to display a level of skill that shows expertise without overstating my ability, which comes across as insecurity to me. It would be like a singer hitting their highest note possible in every line of every song. It becomes obnoxious! But every once in a while, hitting a note that sends chills through their



listener always impresses and leaves them wanting more. If I could ever achieve that in my art I would die a satisfied man.

"As far as the future? I am teaming up with Gabe Ripley and Mary Bowen, Off The Map Tattoos, which is on the East Coast of the U.S. They will be my shop managers and will help schedule a world class line-up of resident and visiting artists to my studio in Oregon.



We are looking forward to hosting small group retreats, art and tattoo workshops and top notch art shows at my gallery. I am gathering a group of friends and colleagues that produce good work and also are interested in playing an influential role in our industry and culture. People like Cory Norris, Nikko Hurtado, Carlos Rojas, Nick Baxter, Jason Butcher, Joshua Carlton, Shigenori Iwasaki, Tomokazu 🍀



FROM MR GOGUE'S BLOG (III)

My friend (Nick Baxter) was one of the other guest speakers this weekend. I have known him for years and worked alongside him often around the world. I had the privilege of attending his seminar and it is as the rumors have it; it is life changing. He is one of the few people I know that shares the stage of the exceptional, intriguing and inspiring individuals among the masses. Alex Depase, of Italy also ignited a new drive in me to reach for higher ground personally, artistically, and professionally. I was honored to share the stage with Nick, Alex, the world class tattooer, Boris of Hungary, and business leader, Gabe Ripley of Tattoo Now at The Paradise Tattoo Gathering. This was an unprecedented event in the tattoo community. Not open to the public, or to people tattooing; it was a true conference for artists to be challenged to step up to the next level in many facets. I am honored and grateful to be one of the people who got to share my thoughts, perspective and insight, and I feel especially grateful for the immediate return of insight, inspiration, and education I received myself. If you get a chance to attend any event like this in the future, I suggest you do what it takes to make that a reality.

Ikarashi... there are just too many to list them all.

"I've been fortunate enough to know some of the world's best tattooers and am looking to be a catalyst that ignites an industry-wide desire to keep climbing to higher ground. I have produced some DVDs, books, seminars and workshops in the past and love doing those things. I plan on more

and am continually formulating new ideas and perspectives that we can look at our trade and move it forward and upward."

And if anyone can do it, Jeff Gogue is the man. His work ethic and love of the industry make him a powerful and unstoppable force, and by the next time he visits our shores, he is sure to be riding that wave yet again. 🐬



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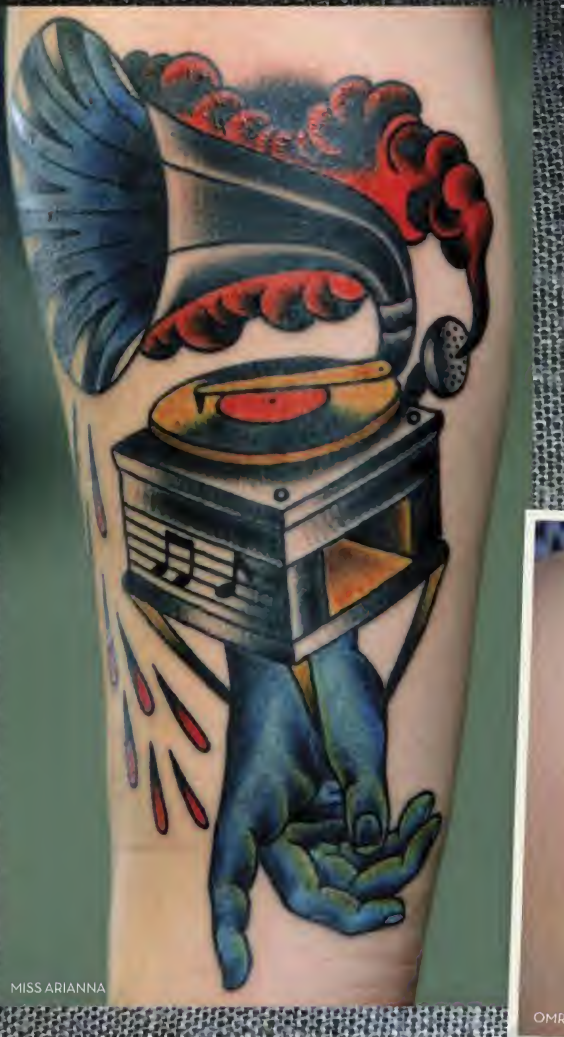
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Casper

Casper has been working at Portsmouth Ink for a while now, and as soon as he joined the team we all knew he would fit in.

Tattooing didn't always come naturally, he has gone through all the learning curves, but determination and lots of hard work has made him who he is today. He is driven, with a remarkable passion for tattooing, with his colour portraits, amazing black and grey work and his colourful realism thrown in for good measure.

Inside the studio at Portsmouth Ink, Casper is a bit of a prankster. He keeps us on our toes and keeps us laughing, but when it comes to the job of tattooing the professional side of him comes out. 80% of what we do is custom work, clients come to him with an idea of what they want but often need help making the final decision. With a quiet confidence he sorts out a few reference pictures and combines them together to come up with some amazing tattoos – the harder the challenge the more he shines.

He is well travelled and has met many tattooists with whom he has shared opinions about work techniques, and put them into practice. He will tell you himself that as an artist you are always learning and you should always push yourself, as you are only as good as your last tattoo.

Casper is based in our Cosham studio, to book in with him call us on 02392 385 252



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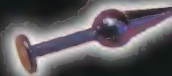
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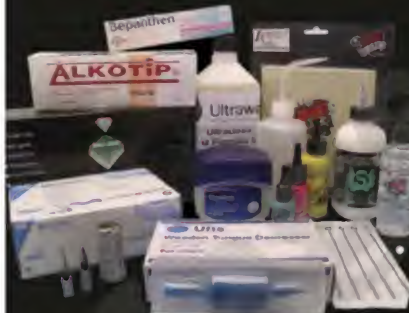
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Design Matters : Think before you ink

Blasphemous

GIRL

My Ruin has seen it all... and a lot of it in 2010. Over the span of a single year, the Los Angeles-based duo went from sailing the high seas to treading dark, murky waters, trapped in an unforeseen label dispute, only to emerge with a vengeance, stronger than ever before



"There is a huge sense of pride we both feel inside to know that we have survived many trials and tribulations in an industry that is notorious for chewing up and spitting out bands," she continues. "We feel blessed to still have the desire, fire and passion that inspires us to create and make music that is honest and relevant without compromising who we are as artists. We've been through a great deal of bullshit, band members and business dealings, that would have most likely destroyed us if we did not have each other to stay focused and keep ourselves sane."

Together – in the band and in life

There is a huge sense of pride
we both feel inside to know that
we have survived many trials and
tribulations in an industry that
is notorious for chewing up and
spitting out bands

For those who haven't been keeping up with their music news, My Ruin – comprised of vocalist, Tairrie B Murphy, and multi-instrumentalist, Mick Murphy, (yup, they're married) – signed a two-album deal in 2010, released their sixth album, *Ghosts and Good Stories*, then the walls came crashing in as their label's empty promises began to crumble. The album release was delayed, the band's tour was cancelled, and a

legal battle ensued. But frustration and anger soon turned into music, and before they expected it, My Ruin were recording a new album in the snowy mountains of Tennessee.

"With *A Southern Revelation* being our seventh album, we've come a long way," says Tairrie B coming off a show at the famed Whisky A Go-Go on Sunset Boulevard, settling in to talk about My Ruin's latest release, which just so happens to be available as a free digital download.

TAIRRIE B ON OFFERING A FREE ALBUM...

This is our way to take our power and integrity back as underground DIY artists. We did it to bypass all the bullshit and to get our record straight to the people who are into what we do. This is our gift to fans and all we ask is that they download it directly from us to get the best quality recording rather than on some random torrent site.

– for over a decade, the twosome's ability to remain focused and feed off each other in the studio, with Tairrie tackling lyrics and Mick handling the music side of things, has remained untouched by time. Which may be why the Murphy's have kept up their unconventional rock/ metal dynamic, opting to remain a duo rather than seek out more members.

"At the end of the day, it's less stress, time and energy to just keep it between us and teach it to whoever 🍌"



It wasn't so much a devil may care attitude for us, it was more of a slaying of the beast, bloodletting mentality with a middle finger. It definitely felt like an exorcism and the purging of a demon.



TAIRRIE B ON THE BUSINESS SIDE OF THINGS...

I often feel I am on call 24/7 when it comes to our business, especially when we have a new album or tour coming up. We do a great deal of our business in the UK and the eight-hour time difference can be a killer. Being in a band is not always as glamorous as people may think it is from the photos they see in magazines. There is a lot of hard work that goes on behind the scenes.

is touring with us at the time of release, because we never really know who is going to be around for the next album or tour," says the frontwoman.

A *Southern Revelation* is just that, a revelation. It has been labeled as My Ruin's most focused, honest album to date, perhaps because catastrophe somehow always seems to breed light.

"We were not really prepared to jump right back into making a new album so soon after we had finished recording our last one. However, we found ourselves writing again only a few months after delivering *Ghosts and Good Stories* in July 2010 because of the label-instigated shit-storm we had to deal with that forced us to cancel our confirmed European tour, which was scheduled for September/October to promote its release," explains Tairrie.

"Making *A Southern Revelation* was a reckoning. It allowed us to mourn the death of our last album the only way we knew how at the time. We left Los Angeles and we kept things quiet and very much under wraps while we were recording for three weeks in Tennessee."

Snow and harsh weather conditions have been known to breed a devil-may-care attitude (take it from a Canadian), which made me wonder if recording in Joel Stooksbury's Soundtrack Black Studio in the hills of East Tennessee had anything to do with the album's sound.

"I think the snowy, cold atmosphere of our surroundings had a heavy impact on me as a lyricist. And being back in Mick's hometown surrounded by family and longtime friends, brought an amazing energy and positive light to what was a very dark and negative situation," says Tairrie.

"It wasn't so much a devil-may-care attitude for us, it was more of a slaying of the beast, bloodletting mentality with a middle finger. It definitely felt like an exorcism and the purging of a demon."

And just as the album was My Ruin's cathartic expression, Tairrie B's reason for sitting down in Ric Clayton's tattoo chair for the first time 17 years ago was part of a journey to liberation.

"I was in an unhealthy relationship

with someone for many years who had tattoos, but hated the idea of women with them," starts Tairrie. "I never really thought about getting one because it wasn't my thing and I couldn't imagine myself with one at the time. It wasn't until we broke up and I decided to finally leave him that the urge suddenly came over me... I think it was about doing something for me on a deep level to mark the change in my life and close that door."

Getting the word 'Babydoll' on the back of her neck, the tattoo was about more than just some pretty lettering. "I feel like I tattooed a delicate word on my skin with my blood and ink as a rite of passage. It helped to give me the strength to walk away from the brutality of the relationship and move forward in my life."

Today, nine tattoos adorn Tairrie, each a carefully thought out, representation of her. "I have never inked something on my body without a significant meaning behind it," she says. "Although my first tattoo was decided on the same night it was done, it represented something



Although my first tattoo was decided on the same night it was done, it represented something very real to me it wasn't just a random word

very real to me; it wasn't just a random word."

Case in point: the two large-scale pieces on her arms, courtesy of Jason McCaffey. "My right arm is the image of a Virgin Mary with the words 'Omnia Vinat Amor' in script above her head and a banner that reads the word 'Truth'. My left arm is the image of a woman burning on a cross draped in a 'Nothing is Sacred' banner in a broken heart with the words 'Mi Ruina Por Vida'."

Marco Cerretelli and Mike Ski also delivered some handy work, with Cerretelli helping to darken her arm tattoos. "Originally they were done with bright colors, but over the years my tattoos always felt a bit too vibrant and loud on my skin," says Tairrie. One of her most recognizable works is, without a doubt, her 🍌

'Blasphemous Girl' forearm tattoo, also the title of one of the first My Ruin songs from over a decade ago and the name of her one-of-a-kind jewellery and clothing line. As you may have guessed, the story behind the ink is extremely personal.

"In late 2006 I was in a serious car accident in which a steel metal rod came through my left arm, and nearly tore it off completely right under the tattoo on my upper arm," recounts Tairrie. "It cut me to the bone and all the way around from my elbow to my wrist. After many surgeries and a skin graft, I was

left with a pretty intense scar and a feeling of unbalance. I decided to ink my right forearm to even myself out. I'm sure that will sound strange to some people, but it made sense to me." But although she enjoys sharing the stories of her past, don't expect Tairrie to let you in on everything.

"I speak very openly about my lyrics, but when it comes to my tattoos I think it's important to keep the stories

behind certain tattoos to myself, because a girl needs to have a few good secrets!"

Over the years, hundreds of My Ruin fan tattoos have been spotted – "it's a huge compliment and testament to the dedication and love for our band that many of our fans

Our culture teaches us to consume, copy, covet
and crave what everyone else has and does and
many people fall into this trap and way of thinking



share" – but time has also spawned unwelcome copycats.

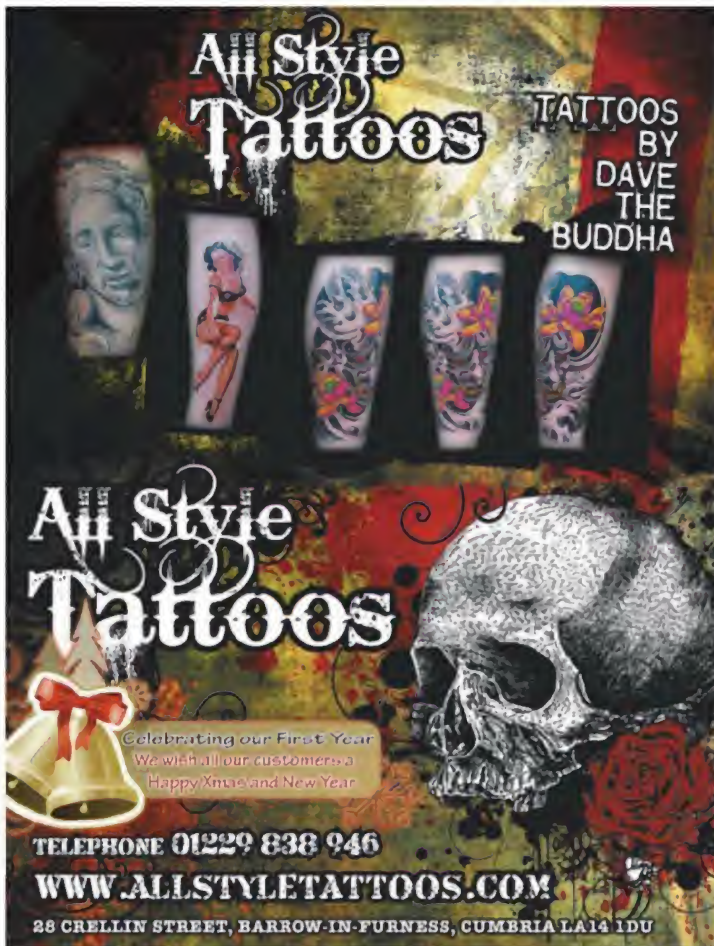
"Our culture teaches us to consume, copy, covet and crave what everyone else has and does; many people fall into this trap and way of thinking," says Tairrie. "This is why it has always bothered me to see people with my same tattoos, especially when they meet me and show me their ink and try to pawn it off as their own original idea of art which is 'inspired' – as they usually put it – by me. When, in reality, it is actually a straight rip-off of my exact tattoo. I find it very weird and it has happened a lot. Why a tattoo artist would agree to replicate someone else's personal art down to its very essence, goes against everything I would think a true artist should stand for."

TAIRRIE B ON WHETHER SHE'D GET A SPOUSE TATTOO...

I have to be honest and say that I wouldn't. Although I adore my husband, I would never get a tattoo that represented anyone but myself. I would rather design a matching piece of jewellery with him.

As Tairrie B. Murphy says so aptly, "Your ink should be yours and yours alone." To download A Southern Revelation for FREE: www.MyRuin.net
For Blasphemous Girl Designs: www.BlasphemousGirlDesigns.com.

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THE ILLUSTRATING MAN

Mark Poole is a quiet and unassuming tattoo artist who works out of his studio, HooDoo Inc. in Stoke-on-Trent. He is also a regular on the convention circuit and one of those artists who prefers working his ass off, than standing up and shouting about how wonderful he is...



Trent Aitken-Smith Mark Poole & Emma Brennan



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Mark is also one of those artists who doesn't think his work is up there with his contemporaries. Yet if you speak to anyone who has seen his work, they will wax lyrical about his genius. He has a full appointment book, he is the brain behind the Tattoo Freeze 2012's poster designs, and people travel the length of the country to get his work on their skin. But all the attention still amazes him and as he once said to me about his success, "I just don't get it!"

As a fan of his work, I thought that should all change a little. So, in an effort to find out more about the man behind the amazing tattoos and artwork, I caught up with Mark

and shot the breeze about him, his work and his dreams. And from the off, I knew it wasn't going to be easy; for one thing Mark doesn't like talking shop, and for another, Mark does not do serious!

"I was born fucking years ago, in a place miles away, and was moved at the age of three to the sunny climes of Stoke-on-Trent... for sins I had yet to commit. After being dragged up on a council estate, I was finally ejected from school for being a pain in the arse. This was when I was about 15. So I had no qualifications, except an O and an A level in fine art. Yes, at 15, a child prodigy apparently, and yet I did nothing professionally with

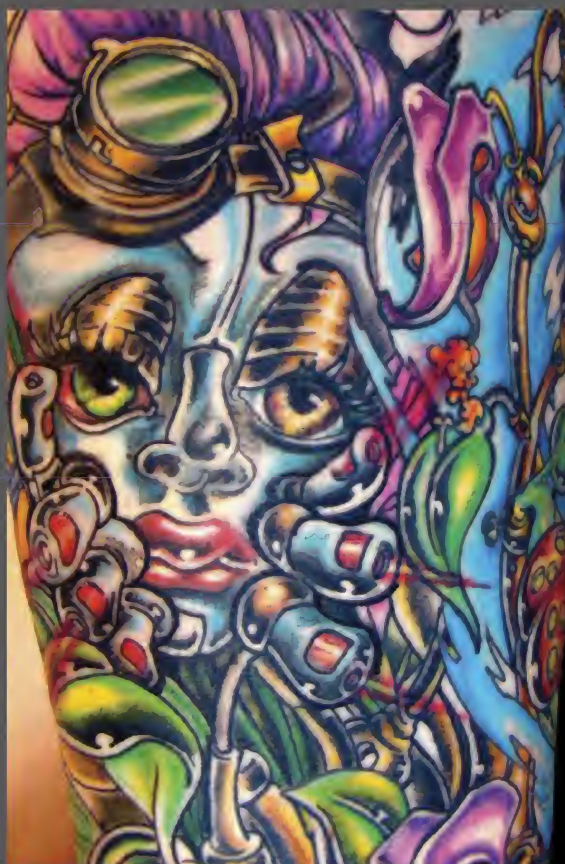
these skills for about 15 years.

"I was about 33 when I got some tattoo work by an artist friend and he looked at my art and suggested I should, 'get some gear and give it a whirl'. I thought about it and decided that I actually couldn't be arsed! I really wanted to be an illustrator and sculptor, and at that point in time, I didn't want to do anything else. Anyway months went by and I got shafted over some sculptures I



I AM ASKED QUITE OFTEN IF I CAN 'HELP' PEOPLE GET INTO THE BUSINESS AND I HELP IF I CAN...BUT IF THE ART ISN'T UP TO SCRATCH, OR THEIR ATTITUDE SUCKS, IT MAKES IT HARD

had done and I was seriously down on the whole idea of 'making it' in art. My photographic memory (if you have met me you know that this is such a lie) then kicked in and I remembered about the 'tattooing thing' and I thought why not! So after another few months research into the health and safety, getting my gear together and spending some time with my tattooing friend where I was given the basics, I was basically set loose on the general public. And it went from there really. Not the



most auspicious start but that's what happened.

"I had to train myself and learn on the fly. I worked full-time and did the rest in my spare time. But if you want to be tattooist, don't do this! Get an apprenticeship from a talented artist and do it right because let me tell you, the way I did it was not good."

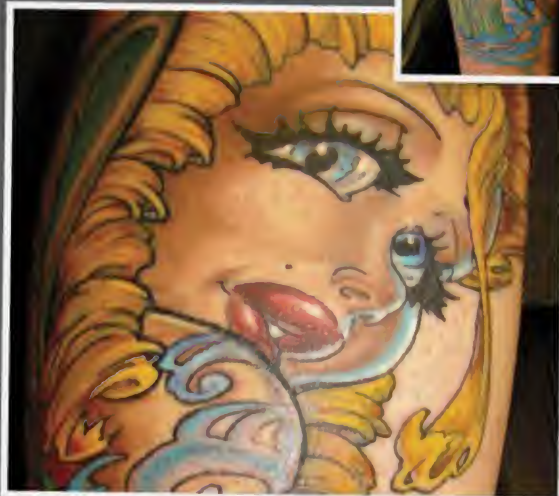
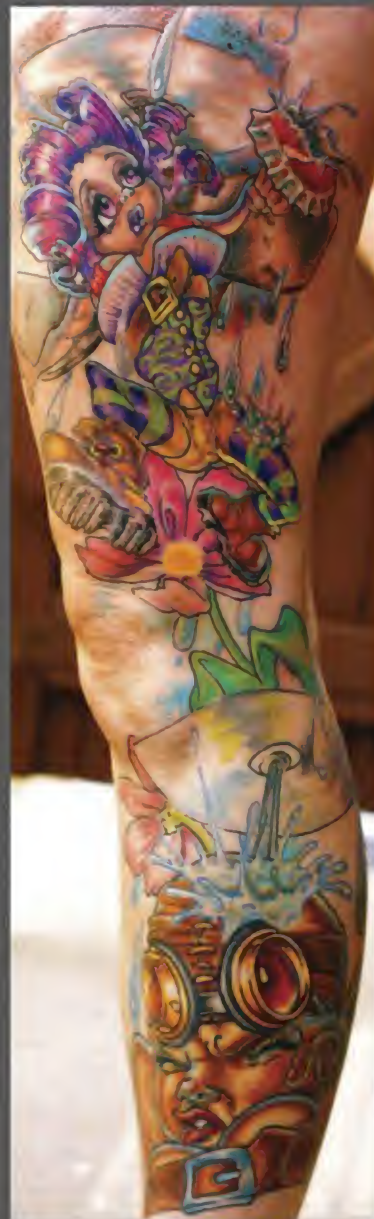
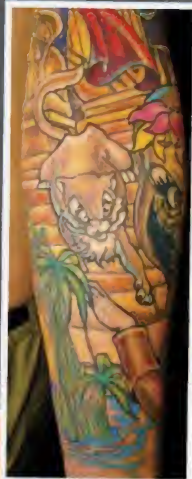
So it seems even child prodigies will wander off on their own course for a while before returning to their true calling. And if we get down to it, Mark is still an illustrator, just on skin instead of paper. But from this shaky start, HooDoo Inc. Bespoke Tattoo Studio was eventually born. And as anyone with children knows, it was never going to be an easy journey.

"It just sort of happened really. The only thing I can definitely say is that it took a bloody long time and hard work. Until I had a decent client base, I worked two full-time jobs and sacrificed everything. With nobody around to help and no one



I HAD TO TRAIN MYSELF AND LEARN ON THE FLY. I WORKED FULL TIME AND DID THE REST IN MY SPARE TIME. BUT IF YOU WANT TO BE TATTOOIST, DON'T DO THIS! GET AN APPRENTICESHIP FROM A TALENTED ARTIST AND DO IT RIGHT BECAUSE LET ME TELL YOU, THE WAY I DID IT WAS NOT GOOD!

to dish out advice, I had no choice but to spend a lot of money trying things and to work every hour I could to gain the respect and the knowledge of other established artists that are 'freely' given to an apprentice. I am asked quite often if I can 'help' people get into the business and I help if I can... but if the art isn't up to scratch, or their attitude sucks, it makes it hard. I

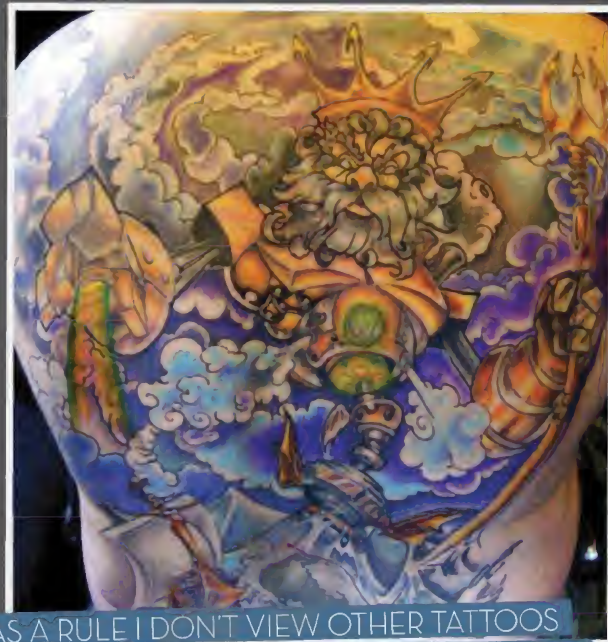


suppose it is my age showing but a 17-year-old who, 'can draw and would make a brilliant tattooist', isn't always going to last, let alone make it in this business. I suppose people are influenced by the media and the supposed glamour of the industry, but to be quite frank there is no glamour in smelling a client's feet or arse for hours at a time. I swear, some people who are starting out in the tattoo world, think that they are going to be opening clubs and driving muscle cars in a couple of weeks of opening or working in a shop. But that is not going to happen!

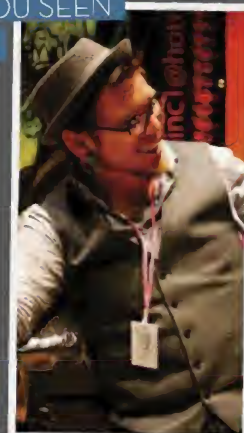
"I think potential tattooists need to be aware of the reality of this

industry and go into it with open eyes and an open mind and most importantly, don't be a 'know it all' dick. It isn't important how you get there, but be clean, be respectful of your clients and other artists, educate your clients if they need it, be honest, and fair and most of all be the best you can be at your job."

Sound advice from Mark and words that a fair few newcomers could follow; the supposed rock 'n' roll lifestyle of tattooing is accessible to very few artists, and at a price. But as Mark has proven, keep your head down and work hard and you could become a respected artist in your field. And work hard he does;



AS A RULE I DON'T VIEW OTHER TATTOOS FOR INFLUENCE BECAUSE OF THE WHOLE THEFT THING. BESIDES LOOKING AT HOW MUCH YOU HAVE LEFT TO LEARN IS CRUSHING! I MEAN, HAVE YOU SEEN DMITRI SAMOHANS WORK?



HooDoo Inc is now up and running and Mark is still pushing it night and day to stay at the top of his game.

"I work alone in a small studio which is good in many ways as you get to progress and concentrate on your work, and, of course, you do as you like and answer to nobody but your conscience. However, the down side is that you don't have the camaraderie and company that working with others gives. And most importantly, you don't get to bounce off others for inspiration."

And going down the apprentice route, is this an option?

"I don't have the space in the present studio for another person, there is barely room for me, so an apprentice is out of the question at the moment. Besides, I wouldn't like to work for me! I'm a cantankerous old bastard at the best of times. And as for working with others, I would like to, but we will just have to wait and see."

Fortunately, Mark does have someone who will put up with the 'cantankerous old bastard'. The real brains and beauty behind HooDoo Inc.

"The actual business is run by Emma, my soon-to-be wife, and The Boss. All contact is made through her. In fact I don't even have a phone! If people want to get some work from me they need to contact

Emma and it will move from there. If it was left to me, I'd be running the business into the ground."

Behind every successful man and all that Mark. With that, we move onto Mark's style. It is a style that is quite distinctive and easily identifiable, like taking the best of what's out there, mixing it together and coming up with a unique style. This, of course, begs the questions, who or what inspires Mark to produce fresh and original work each time he sits down to work on a new design?

"My style is heavily influenced by a number of artists; Didier Crisse, Barbara Caneppe, Simon Bisley, Kev Walker, Jesse Smith, Craola, Daniel Merriam, Michael Parkes, Kim Hyung Tae... oh the list goes on and on and no doubt will continue to grow.

"As a rule I don't view other tattoos for influence because of the whole theft thing; besides looking at how much you have left to learn 🙄"

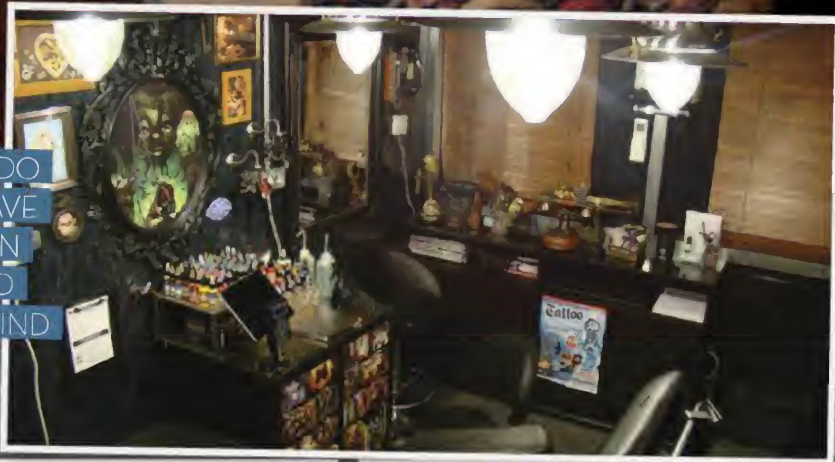
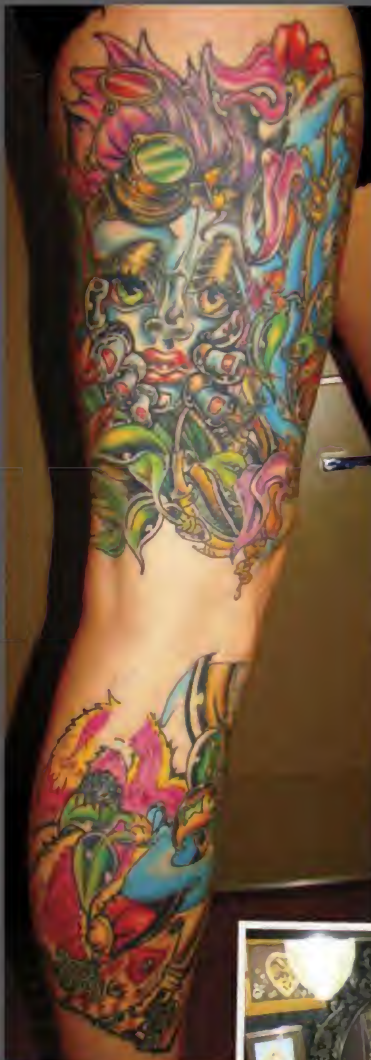


is crushing! I mean, have you seen Dmitri Samohans work? And I would fight tooth and nail against copying another's art, for no other reason than the fact that I want to do original work. This is why I draw direct to skin for every tattoo I do and my strict no stencil policy. I don't have anything against stencils, but I find I can make things fit better if I draw freehand and it also keeps things fresher in my mind. Also I never learned how to use stencils properly, they always smudge! On top of this, I tattoo for an average of 12 hours a day and spend the other four or five hours doing all the other day-to-day stuff a husband and father of two has to do. So when do I get time to make the bloody stencils anyway?"

And we're back to the solid work ethic that has driven Mark from the beginning. A work ethic that has got him noticed and is slowly but surely, driving him to the top of the tattooing world. And no doubt, with a passion and drive like his, the future is already shaping up nicely for Mark, Emma and HooDoo Inc.

"I feel I have so much to learn, and what I have learned, I have yet


I DRAW DIRECT TO SKIN FOR EVERY TATTOO I DO AND A STRICT NO STENCIL POLICY. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING AGAINST STENCILS BUT I FIND I CAN MAKE THINGS FIT BETTER IF I DRAW FREEHAND AND IT ALSO KEEPS THINGS FRESHER IN MY MIND



to master. So the future for me is to get better at what I do! Whenever I view my work, I only see faults, so although I am happy with the design, I will see many things wrong and I want to set them right.

"I would also like to do more illustration work. I have just had my first commission published, the 2012 Tattoo Freeze poster, and I loved that experience. I am also working, slowly, on an illustrated book with an author friend. But that's top secret and I won't be drawn on it... so don't ask! As I work in relative isolation, I am trying to do conventions as often as my diary allows. I find it

very inspiring to be around other artists and besides the conventions are a bloody good laugh, if a bit knackered. Next year I am doing my first guest spot and I am looking forward to that so much. It will be good to be in another country for a bit and soak up the atmosphere and see how other artists live and work."



And I suspect all of this is just the beginning of a very long and successful career for Mark. Who knows, maybe one day, we'll see his work on canvas as well as skin. One can only hope that it is onwards and upwards for Mark Poole and HooDoo Inc. 

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BOOKS OF MAGIC

Much as there are cars and then there are Cars, movies and Movies – you get my drift – so there are art books and there are Art Books. For want of a better phrase, Edition Reuss don't fuck about when it comes to publishing

■ Sion Smith ■ courtesy Edition Reuss and as credited



The first time I ever saw an Edition Reuss publication was quite a revelation. As much as we love it, tattoo art as a publishing venture still occupies what is something of a niche in the grand scheme of things. The titles from Edition Reuss are not normal books. They are very heavy, massive, incredibly proud publications with attention to every aspect of detail. If you are the owner of one of them, you'll know what I'm talking about – particularly if you bought it at a show and then had to carry it home.

Matthias Reuss – he of the incredible vision to bring these books to life – is a mainstay on

the convention circuit, although how he manages to transport his product around is beyond me. How he manages to stay quite so humble about it is another mystery – but one I shall probably never get to the bottom of.

I first met him in London last year and quite honestly, told him what I thought of his product. A year later and I always feel like I haven't quite said enough whenever these tomes come in for review. Bearing that in mind, we got together again recently to look at the latest releases from the stable and talk about the shape of things to come. "Edition Reuss is basically a creative



I WANT PEOPLE TO BE ABLE TO CLEARLY SEE EVERY DETAIL AND TO UNDERSTAND HOW IT WAS PUT ONTO THE SKIN. LIKE THE BAUHAUS DESIGNERS, I FOLLOW TWO FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES: 'LESS IS MORE' AND 'FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION'

and artistic project. I'm still primarily a graphic designer, and I prioritise the best possible presentation of the photographs in my books. I personally create the design for each of these high-class books; I choose the appropriate paper and I assure the highest-quality printing and binding for each book. This is especially the case with the tattoo books... I love the large format.

"I want people to be able to clearly see every detail and to understand how it was put onto the skin. Like the Bauhaus designers, I follow two fundamental principles: 'less is more' and 'form follows function'."

And while this goes some way to

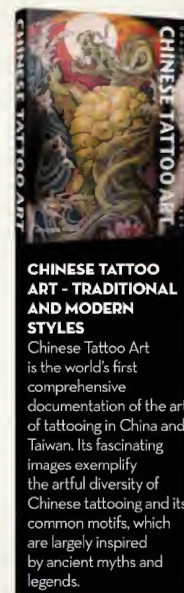
explaining the work ethic behind the final product, how does a man bring the concept of something so flawless to life for people?

"After completing my academic studies in graphic design and photography, and after several years in the advertising business, I founded my own publishing house – Edition Reuss – in 1996. As a photographer too, I've always been fascinated by the beauty of the human body, and I translated this fundamental artistic motif into my book projects. It seemed perfectly logical to also apply my aesthetic and stylistic ideas to the art of tattooing. Here, there's no longer any distance between the person and the artwork.

The skin becomes the canvas, and the tattooed person becomes the work of art, which gleams by virtue of its embodiment in the individual."

What are we looking at here then? From the initial seed of an idea to completion must take a reasonably long time. Do you work only with people you know or are you quite open to ideas that aren't your own as well – and one of the things that readers may take for granted, but is appreciated in many corners of the world, is that you publish in many different languages – that's not something everybody takes the time to do.

"Most of my book projects take shape from my own ideas. Photographers 📷





THERE'S NO LONGER ANY DISTANCE BETWEEN THE PERSON AND THE ARTWORK. THE SKIN BECOMES THE CANVAS, AND THE TATTOOED PERSON BECOMES THE WORK OF ART, WHICH GLEAMS BY VIRTUE OF ITS EMBODIMENT IN THE INDIVIDUAL

who are enthusiastic about the aesthetics and the brilliant quality of the printing in all the books published by Edition Reuss often approach me to suggest specific projects. When I have an idea for a new book myself, I sometimes contact an author or a photographer whom I feel would be right for the project. "I've built up a global network of contacts over the years. Anyone who

has a good idea for book shouldn't hesitate to send an email to me at photobooks@edition-reuss.de, but everybody should be aware that some book projects take a long time to mature to the point where they're ready to go to press. For big tattoo books, for example, it usually takes about a year from the initial idea to the completed book.

"As far as the language production

goes, all of my books are mainly trilingual – in English, German (my native language), and French or Spanish. One advantage of this is that I needn't worry about getting foreign-language licenses. And my international distributing partners appreciate the fact that my books are multilingual."

As we've already discussed, one – and probably the best way – of getting these books in front of as many people as possible is at conventions. Does that work out well for you guys?

"There are countless very cool tattoo conventions nowadays. It's impossible



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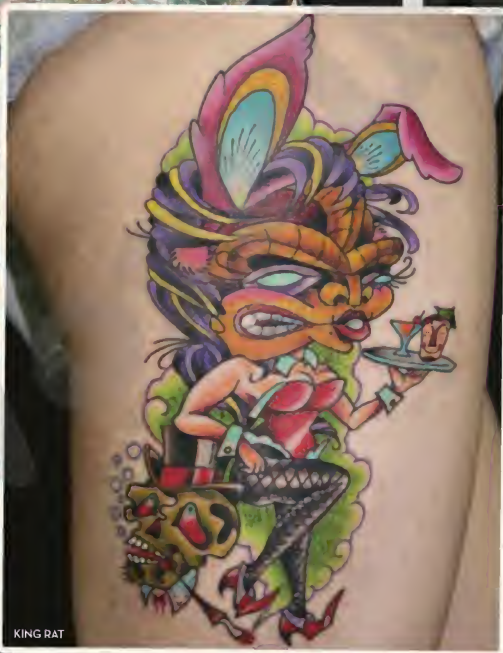
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LATINO ART COLLECTION
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 Edgar Hoill, the co-author of the much-praised tattoo trilogy "Black & Grey Tattoo 1-3," presents the "Latino Art Collection - Tattoo Inspired Chicano, Maya, Aztec and Mexican Styles" a globally unique compilation of motifs from the ambience of Latin American culture. This lavishly illustrated large-format volume features the work of artists and tattooists who rank among the best that the scene has to offer. They come from the Chicano scene in Los Angeles and elsewhere in California, as well as from Mexico and Europe.

to be present personally at all of them. Fortunately, in many countries, I have business partners who offer my books at the conventions. I would really like to go to more tattoo conventions than I've been able to attend thus far.

"When you and I first met though, we were promoting Black & Grey Tattoo of which Edgar Hoill was a co-author, and the fact that we could exhibit some of his original photography in

London along with Lars Krutak's work and the book that he authored on headhunters in Kalinga Tattoo was invaluable. Those books were published almost simultaneously and visitors at the show were enthusiastic and very interested in not only learning more about the art of tattooing and its various styles, but also about the history and ethnological roots of it." I assume that the reach of Edition



SHIH-MIN WU



FRED LAVERNE



EVAN SKREDERSTU



REN LIANG

I OFTEN GET INTO SOME VERY INTERESTING DISCUSSIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, COPS SOMETIMES PROUDLY CONFIDE TO ME THAT THEY WEAR JAPANESE OR TRIBAL TATTOOS BENEATH THEIR UNIFORMS

Reuss extends far beyond the reach of the norm also - do you take your books to places where people outside of the expected get to see them?

"Yes, for the past 15 years, we have regularly been present at the world's largest book fair in Frankfurt am Main, where we have our own stand and numerous glass showcases. Naturally, we also present all our tattoo books there. The audience's interest is astonishingly strong. Tattoo fans flock to our stand. The spectrum of fans ranges from flipped-out teenagers through businessmen in suits to police officers. I often get into some very interesting discussions. For example, cops sometimes proudly confide to me that they wear Japanese or tribal tattoos beneath their uniforms."

So, there you have it. Now I know what Matthias does with his time, it's hard to ever see him doing anything else with his life - not that he would want to as far as I can tell. For the immediate future though, what can we expect over the coming year?

"What can I say? There are so many more talented artists out there. Their breathtaking tattoo work should be published, and there'll be more of these beautiful tattoo books at Edition Reuss. Some of these projects will see the light in spring and autumn of 2012."

To find out more on the complete range of books from Edition Reuss, head over to their website at www.edition-reuss.de to keep up to date with news on their latest publications.



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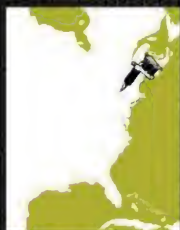
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Poor Josh Bodwell looks bleary eyed. All around him day two of Tattoo Jam is getting cranked up, but his body is still somewhere back in the US. No, we're not getting all metaphysical – he's been travelling for 24 hours and his body clock is all over the place

But he's ready for a day at the convention, right? "Sure," he chuckles from underneath his hat. "It's taken me a little bit to get my head on straight, but once I acclimate I'll be alright." Do we need to set up a coffee drip to help him prepare? "You know what, I think sometimes I don't prepare enough! My daily warm up at the studio is usually having a laugh with the guys before we start. But here at the show it's all about speaking to people, trying to get my head in the game." Well, we can help with that. Let's talk...

The studio in question is Funhouse Tattooing in Tannersville, Pennsylvania, about 90 minutes west of New York city, where he's worked alongside owner Mike Ruocco for the last ten years. It's





a rural setting that still attracts plenty of clients from the Big Apple and New Jersey, says Josh, "I think our store is less of a street shop and more a destination shop. It's the place where I learned and I've been there ever since. I think that's to my advantage because I've built up a core of people, I have clients

who are like lifers, you know?"

In this context, 'lifers' is more about loyalty than in the Shawshank Redemption sense, and having a roster of returning clients is important to Josh. "You're creating art on people forever, you know, and it's very personal," he says. "I think sometimes artists lose a little of that, the person is just a canvas and that's as far as it goes. But I really do like having clients who are friends, who I see through different stages of their life." That might mean a tattoo for their wedding, then later on to celebrate their first child – it's very much an ongoing thing, "and for me that's the joy of it."

"I do see people getting really wrapped up in their work – and they should be, we're artists after all, and we're trying to do the best work we possibly can. But people are going to carry this around for the rest of their lives, you know, and I dig that."



IT MAKES ME REALLY HAPPY WHEN SOMEONE COMES BACK AND SAYS 'THANKS FOR DOING THIS PIECE FOR ME FIVE YEARS AGO. I'VE NEVER STOPPED TALKING ABOUT IT AND I WANT SOME MORE'. I LOVE THAT

EVOLVING INK

Of course, we've all got a finite amount of skin, so 'regulars' in the tattoo world means something different to those you'd see in the hairdressers. But for every client Josh never sees again, there's one who returns further down the line. "It makes me really happy when someone comes back and says 'thanks for doing this piece for me five years ago, I've never stopped talking about it and I want some more'. I love that."

The hall is getting busier around us now and as the jet lag fog clears, the question of lifers (repeat tattoo offenders?) raises an intriguing question – what's it like to see your own artistic evolution on someone you've been tattooing for a number of years?

"Sometimes it's not so pleasant!" he laughs, "I find as an artist that I can't leave well enough alone, I'm constantly fiddling with my older stuff. But I have people who have the full evolution, right from my earliest work to the stuff I'm doing now."

People tend to have different views on revisiting and revising their old work, but for Josh there's no choice – he's a natural born filler. "If I see a piece, it's going to bother me if I don't get to mess around with it." 🍌



He concedes that there's a balance to be struck, knowing he'd go mad if he never let a piece go. "Sometimes I'll see a piece and think 'well, I would make different choices now, but I appreciate it for what it is and I feel comfortable with it'. The fact is that people who have them, love what I did then and they love what I do now, so I couldn't be happier about that."

RISE OF THE NERD

So, here's something you need to know about this artist: it's all about a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away. His dream piece would be The Empire Strikes Back original movie poster as a full back piece (which we'd very much like to see... volunteers, please). Comic books, sci-fi and Star Wars are the DNA of his artistic development, and even though his style began with illustrative tattooing and evolved towards realism, that comic book influence has never left him. "My love of bold, graphic colour work and fantasy art comes in, so I work with a kind of colour-blast that relates back to my original stuff. I like to do pieces that you'll notice,



I HAVE A DEEP LOVE AND RESPECT FOR ALL TATTOO ART. THAT'S WHY I GOT INTO IT IN THE FIRST PLACE. I'M NOT AN OLD SCHOOLER BY ANY MEANS BUT A DECADE AGO IT WAS STILL QUITE DIFFERENT YOU DIDN'T HAVE THE TV SHOWS OR NEARLY AS MUCH ACCEPTABILITY

that really jump off the skin; that's what I hope to produce as an artist."

As far as Josh is concerned, tattooing should be used for knowledge and defence – never attack... sorry, getting carried away. But he makes the point that new graphic styles inspired by fantasy or comic art can exist in parallel with more traditional art. "I have a deep love and respect for all tattoo art, that's why I got into it in the first place. I'm not an Old Schooler by any means, but a decade ago it was still quite different, you didn't have the TV shows or nearly as much acceptability, but I just really loved the art." He still switches to traditional Americana occasionally for the simple love of the style, he says, "but it's a changing culture, people want other images... and isn't the ultimate question 'what is art?' and 'what is tattoo art?' I see stuff that the progressive artists are doing now





WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE

In case you're tempted to scoff at Josh's unabashed love for Star Wars, you should know that he's a) too enthusiastic to care, and b) has used it to unearth a niche market, which is helpful for any artist. "I don't think there's anything better than combining a love of tattoo art with my Star Wars nerd-dom - is that a word? - and it's great if that's filtering into the tattoo world alongside the more traditional images. I do a lot of conventions now that aren't tattoo conventions, they're comic book and entertainment shows. And nowadays the people at those shows love tattoos and want to get tattoos of their favourite characters, so it's cool to merge those two worlds."

that I would never have thought of. There's definitely room for it all."

USING THE FORCE

When Josh says tattoo art led him here, he means it - a punk rock teendom spent sneaking tattoo magazines into his school books meant it was something he was always heading towards. There were detours along the way into graphic design, and before that an ambition to be a comic book artist. "But I did some classes and realised it wasn't really for me, having deadlines to create a certain number of pages and with an editor standing over me. When I got older I met some comic book artists and I realised that it's a grind, and it lost some of its lustre for me."

So graphic design it was, as a way of paying the bills. Meanwhile he kept drawing, working up designs for friends (including a little tribal piece that became his first ever ink) and hanging around at Funhouse until he got "really, really lucky. Mike had seen my art and he really pushed me along and said 'you

really need to be doing this', and I was like 'yes, I do, show me!' and so I just fell right into it." Taking his existing artistic and graphic design backgrounds, he channelled them "into some semblance of tattooing."

Good against remotes is one thing though - good against the living is something else, so he took his time to complete his training. "I didn't have to sweep the floors for a year first or anything," he says, to clarify. "It was a slow build up of skills, it was hammered into me to be proficient at line work before doing any of the flashy imagery. So I did a year of kanji, lettering and tribal armbands to build up the technical skills, but all the time having some trusting and amazing friends who would let me experiment on them; and it went from there." 🌟





I'VE EVEN GOT A PRIEST WHO COMES IN. THE FIRST TIME HE CAME IN HE HAD HIS COLLAR ON AND EVERYTHING. HE GOT A LITTLE CELTIC CROSS. WHAT A FANTASTIC GUY - IT WAS THE ULTIMATE PROOF THAT TATTOOING HAS OPENED UP TO A WHOLE NEW AUDIENCE



Ah, those willing friends. Where would developing artists be without them? "I guess we'd all have trial pieces on our sides!" he laughs. "I worked in various styles growing up, charcoal realism and things like that, so artistically it was something I'd already ventured into - it was a case of showing someone a drawing and saying 'I swear I can do this on you, just give me the chance'."

THERE IS NO TRY

These forays into realism proved successful and Josh built up a client base happy to let him experiment on their skin. It's not one-way traffic though. "I understand that I'm doing

my art, but the client is still very important to me - I'm doing it for them and I've never forgotten that. So I like a certain amount of input and I'm usually inspired by that, it's not a cold thing where they give me a general idea and I tell them 'you're getting that'. Sometimes even a simple comment can take a design in a different direction."

An open mind is the key to being a

good client in Josh's eyes. "The worst kind of client is one who's steadfast in their bad idea! I like someone who's pumped about a piece, who allows me to be creative... and I guess who doesn't move a lot."

The clients who actually arrive in the Funhouse are a varied lot and include doctors, lawyers, parents, grandparents... "hell, I've even got a priest who comes in." Really? "The first time he came in, he had his collar on and everything; he got a little Celtic cross. What a fantastic guy – it was the ultimate proof that tattooing has opened up to a whole new audience. You never know who's got a tattoo, and who's going to walk in through the door."

Speaking of which, a prospective client has arrived at Josh's booth, so it's time to let the man work. He has come a long way, after all. We stop by



later to see how things are going and find him crafting an unusual cover-up piece on the lady in question, complete with skull and flowers, to get rid of some rogue's name who no longer deserves his skin time. He's clearly in the zone now and the fatigue has gone, so he's enjoying his first ever convention in England.

"I've just been getting into the convention circuit recently because I've been focused on the shop for many years. I enjoy travelling; I see so many techniques and get inspired by artists, it affects the way I tattoo."

True to form, he's found a giant Star Wars convention to work at next year in Florida. "I'll be in heaven. I'm going to find that client who wants the Star Wars back piece!" Until then, and always, he's going to be pushing forward. "I don't think you'll ever know everything," he says, "and if I get to a point where I think I do, I'm going to have to hang it up. My style is constantly evolving, I have no idea where it'll be in another five years; but right now, as long as I've got people willing to get Star Wars tattoos, I'm a happy camper!" Every time we pass by for the rest of the day he's busily inking away – so keep an eye on the convention circuit, because the Force is strong with this one. 🌌

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The 'Seine', the 'Louvre', the 'Eiffel Tower', the 'Arc de Triomphe' and the 'Moulin Rouge'... known all over the world for its monuments and its artistic and cultural life, Paris' attractions draw in about 30 million visitors every year...

Paris was originally nicknamed the 'City of Light' (not City of Lights as it is sometimes misquoted) because it was a vast centre of education and ideas during the Age of Enlightenment. In 1828, Paris began lighting the Champs-Élysées with gas lamps. It was the first city in Europe to do so, earning the luminary moniker in the process.

This year, Tattoo Art Fest (or TAF) is celebrating its fifth anniversary and took place for the first time at the circus – and not just any circus – it took us to the International Fratellini's

TO MAKE IT WORK, THE ORGANISERS DECIDED TO TURN THE MAIN CIRCUS TENT INTO AN ARENA. WITH ITS RICH, PLUSH DÉCOR OF WOOD AND VELVET



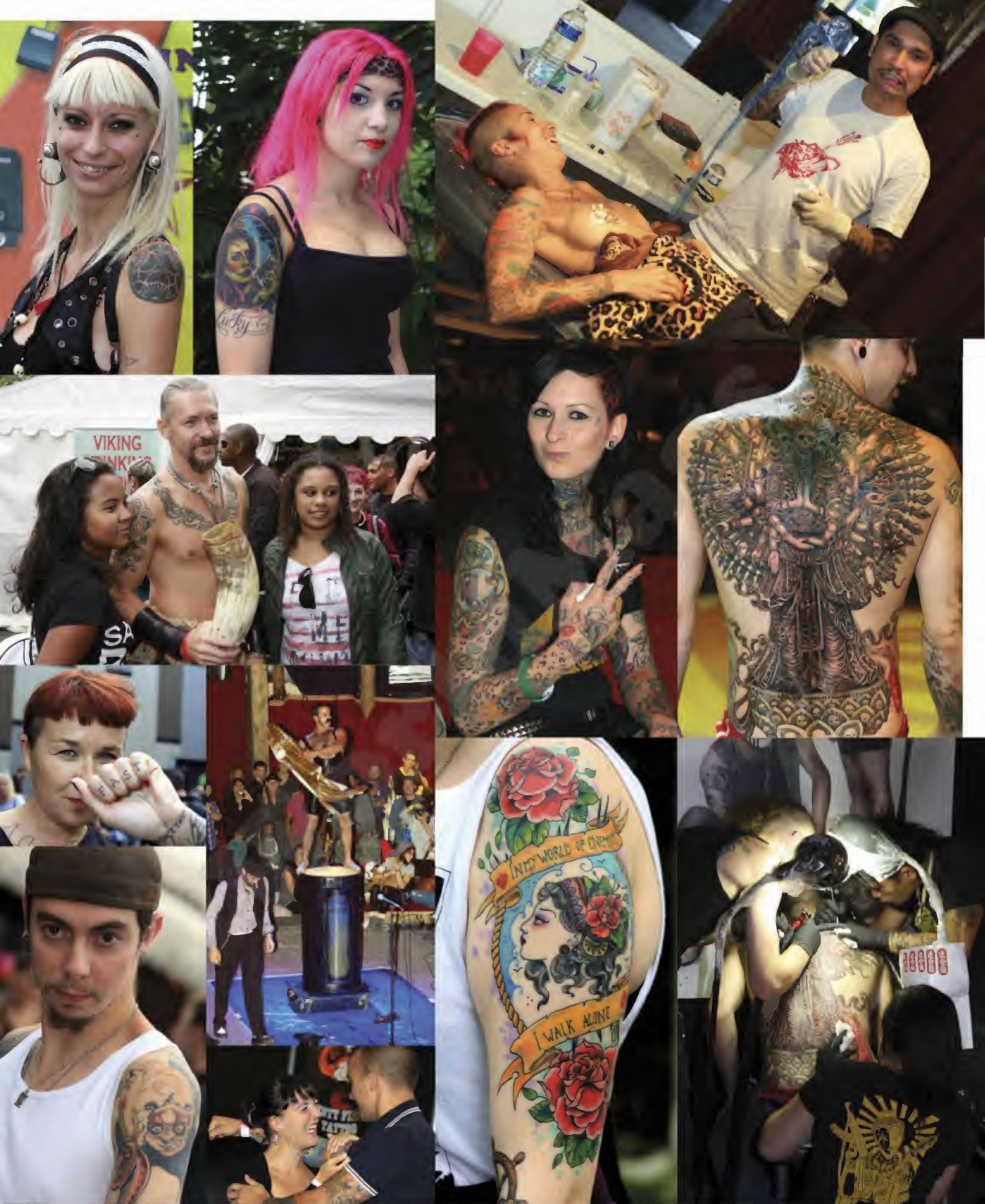
THE BLACK DEATH

Paris' population was around 200,000 when the Black Death arrived in 1348, killing as many as 800 people a day; 40,000 later died from the plague in 1466. During the 16th and 17th centuries, plague visited the city for almost one year out of three. Paris lost its position as seat of the French realm during occupation of the English-allied Burgundians during the Hundred Years' War, but regained its title when Charles VII of France reclaimed the city from English rule in 1436. From then on, Paris became the French capital once again in title, but France's real centre of power remained in the Loire Valley until King Francis I returned the crown residences to Paris in 1528.

Academy (International School of Circus Techniques) across the weekend of October 16-18. One stop away from the centre of the capital, the Fratellini's Academy offers a voluptuous set-up with two hardwood circus tents and a hall which comfortably welcomed Tattoo Art Fest.

To make it work, the organisers decided to turn the main circus tent into an arena. With its rich, plush décor of wood and velvet, the central track offered shows during each of the three days of the festival that were even possible to watch while getting tattooed in the surrounding areas.

The big top was transformed into multiple arenas and for weekend. Thus, the public was able to discover and appreciate the works of several famous French and international tattooers: Joey Ortega from the USA, 🌟





Inkvaders from Switzerland, our old Belgian friends at La Boucherie Moderne, the native Art Corpus and Dimitri HK along with Sanhugi from Vietnam, among many others.

The Fratellini Academy – which is situated in northern of Paris – is an incredible spot and a unique place. This year, people came in even greater numbers than they did last; paths were crowded and it was a pleasure to be in this circus universe which was so different and completely removed from the norm.

It's important to focus on the notion of 'artistic' tattoos here, and so seems to avoid the usual clichés both with regards to the personalities and the tattoos in themselves. The tattooers present at TAF came from all over the world, most of them are very young and appear to be draftsmen, taggers, graphic designers or painters, with most studying in specific schools of thought when it

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DAYS OF THE DEAD
Condemned from 1786, the contents of all Paris' parish cemeteries were transferred to a renovated section of Paris' then suburban stone mines outside the Left Bank 'Porte d'Enfer' city gate (today 14th arrondissement's place Denfert-Rochereau). Part of this network of tunnels and remains can be visited today on the official tour of the Catacombs. After a tentative creation of several smaller suburban cemeteries, Napoleon Bonaparte provided a more definitive solution in the creation of three massive Parisian cemeteries outside the city tax wall called the Wall of the Farmers-General. Open from 1804, these were the cemeteries of Père Lachaise, Montmartre, Montparnasse, and later Passy.



comes to the fine arts.

This year, Tattoo Art Fest rewarded the most beautiful tattoos of the convention with a winner fee – everyone pays two euros with the winner pocketing the total of the registrations. As with previous years, the tattoo contest also awarded the 'Best of Bad' for the ugliest tattoo. This is not meant to disparage the tattooers nor to mention their name, but simply to allow people who have enough of a sense of humour make fun of themselves. Whether such an award could take hold in other countries around the world, probably remains to be seen!

Overall, I think we can say that the Paris Tattoo Art Fest 2011 was another success and shows itself to be one of the jewels in the crown of global conventions. 🐼

Classifieds

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Tattooist, apprentice and piercer required – Oxfordshire. Busy studio needing more staff. Tattooist must have five years experience and amazing portfolio. Apprentice must be friendly, willing to learn and excellent at art. Piercer with at least one years experience. Please phone for more details – 01235 550333.

Broad Street Studio in Bath are looking for an apprentice. Anyone interested please email a covering letter telling us a bit about yourself and your portfolio to: info@broadstreetstudio.co.uk or call the studio on 01225 329825.

Professional tattoo artist wanted to work at Army Of Ink, Doncaster. Minimum three years of studio experience references will be required. Applicants must be able to do custom work as well as flash and have a strong interest in portraiture. Have no drug or drink issues and have extreme high levels of hygiene. This is a great opportunity for the right person with a passionate and professional approach to work. Any enquires or to apply please email with some examples of your work to: armyofink11@hotmail.co.uk.

Busy modern tattoo studio in Shropshire seeks second tattoo artist. Must be clean, alcohol and drug free with at least three years shop experience. Will be required to tattoo a variety of styles, design custom pieces as well as off the wall stuff! Need to provide photographic examples of previous work and references will be sought. Please call 07890834172 and leave details.

Experienced tattoo artist wanted. Our well-established and busy studio in Reading is looking for a friendly, reliable full-time artist to join the team. You must have had ample studio experience and a strong portfolio; you must be able to do custom designs as well as flash; realism is a must! Must be loyal and

trustworthy. No bad attitudes, drink or drug problems, or timewasters. please send cv to: nolimitstattooing@hotmail.co.uk – No Limits, 395 Oxford Road, Reading, RG30 1HA.

Experienced tattoo artist wanted. Please send all your details to: info@portsmoutink.co.uk with some pictures of your work.

Piercing apprenticeship wanted in Hampshire. Passionate, hard-working and eager to learn. Worked briefly in a studio environment, any offers would be greatly appreciated, thank you. Contact at: amanda1nicholls@hotmail.com or 07517170967.

Skin Inc Tatttoo Braintree are looking for a versatile tattooist to join our busy team. We're looking for someone with a minimum of three years shop experience with an up-to-date and diverse portfolio, who is happy to take on custom and flash work. The shop is part of a large tattoo family with the opportunity to work at the London and Brighton International Tattoo Conventions. Check out our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/skinintattoo or email the shop: skinintattoo@btconnect.com for more info.

Rudeboy Studios in Norwich is looking for a portrait/photo realism artist to join the team in there busy city centre studio. This is not a position for an amateur or wannabe Miami Inker. English speaking professionals only, high profile busy studio with hard earned reputation. Send portfolios to: rudeboytattoo@gmail.com.

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CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION

Late one summer, as I dashed to my local shopping precinct to purchase some seemingly necessary item, I noticed a young girl in a sleeveless summer dress, not unlike my own. Her little arms were tanned brown, farmer style, and dotted all over with tattoo transfers



Paula Hardy-Kangelos

She looked at me, I looked at her, she looked at me some more, and I dashed into the chemist with the over-riding feeling that I had just seen a future tattooed lady.

Having children and being tattooed can sometimes feel like a difficult negotiation. It's easy to imagine issues and problems, cast as we are into a different social sphere – a world of playgrounds and parents evenings instead of punk rock; baby groups and breastfeeding instead of bad ass-ery. We imagine judgment from both sides, accusations of settling down and selling out, or criticism for choosing a lifestyle perceived to affect our children adversely.

When my son, Nate (now 11), was very small, he concluded, in the style of Occam's razor, that the universal truth was a simple one – that all mummies, not just his, were covered in pictures. He was shocked (and rather disappointed) to discover this wasn't the case when he started quizzing his fellow nursery-goers as to what featured in their parents' tattoo collections and was met with blankness and confusion.

Since then, his feelings towards his tattooed momma have alternated wildly between intense, heart bursting pride and utter, spirit crushing embarrassment. Initially mortified by his mother's insistence at having his name tattooed on her knuckles (instead of the classic Western traditional 'Love' and 'Hate', I sport 'Love' and 'Nate'), his horror has now mellowed into secret, couldn't-

possibly-be-admitted satisfaction.

Babies, children and immense parental pride often inspire tattoos, from simple names, to portraits, to seemingly random images that elicit memories or private, familial jokes. There is an identifiable impulse to commemorate the permanence of a parent/child relationship with a permanent artwork. And the closeness of that bond is conceptually acknowledged by the tattoo, which is surely the most intimate of art forms. We hold our children in our hearts and demonstrate this to the world by having images in their honour etched on our skin.

RECENTLY, WHILST WAITING IN OUR LOCAL CHIP SHOP WE WERE INNOCENTLY QUIZZED BY A MEMBER OF STAFF AS TO WHY OUR SON DIDN'T HAVE TATTOOS, WHEN HIS PARENTS SO OBVIOUSLY DID?

Recently, whilst waiting in our local chip shop we were innocently quizzed by a member of staff as to why our son didn't have tattoos, when his parents so obviously did? On the surface, this query was quite amusing, but it was also thoughtful. We are not born with our tattoos, they are not brightly coloured birthmarks, but instead they are life marks. We cannot yet confirm or deny if our little blank caterpillar will become a tattooed butterfly; if tattooed people of the future will be the outcome of tattooed parents in the present. But it is interesting to think of the tattoo collector as something you become, not something you intrinsically are.

Becoming something is a journey – birth, childhood, adolescence

and onwards – to be tattooed is to punctuate some of those traditional seven stages of man, to arrest them momentarily, to ask questions of our physicality and highlight our mortality. Becoming a parent works similarly, we stop, reflect and continue our journey as if with new eyes, the same, yet different, altered forever. It's natural then, to mark these alterations and to celebrate them, even to attempt to preserve them.

I have a tattoo of one of my son's drawings, a multi-limbed fantasy being rendered in the way that only a small person can, naively and without giving a fig for proportion or scale. It's charming, I adore it and I am not alone here, sharing a visual language of love and commitment with other tattooed parents. To have a child's drawing tattooed feels so natural – to take what was only intended to be a scribble, a never to be repeated moment and memorialise it, is to cherish it, to hold onto that

time, like a treasured childhood snapshot.

The attitude required to live as a tattooed person could be described as naive or childlike, we must

give scant regard to imagined consequence, preferring to act on our instincts, collecting beautiful images the way children gather interesting stones, coins, or rubbers, displaying them proudly, but on our flesh, not our windowsills (I'm glad I'm not the only parent with an insane collection of rubbers littering the house. Ed.). We must proudly live in the moment.

I'll leave you with my favourite child/tattoo anecdote, a statement from a young chap, around the age of eight, who looked me up and down and declared that I "must have eaten a lot of bubblegum".

This month's column is dedicated to Nate and Ivy Clementine, and was written somewhere between the maternity ward and yet another nappy change.



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